Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

1163

Ravenloft®

Adventure

the Shadow Rift

TSR

the Shadow Rift

by

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Special Thanks: Steve Miller & Ed Stark

Dedication

This adventure is thankfully dedicated to everyone who has ever written a letter or spoken up in a seminar to ask "What's this Shadow Rift thing?"

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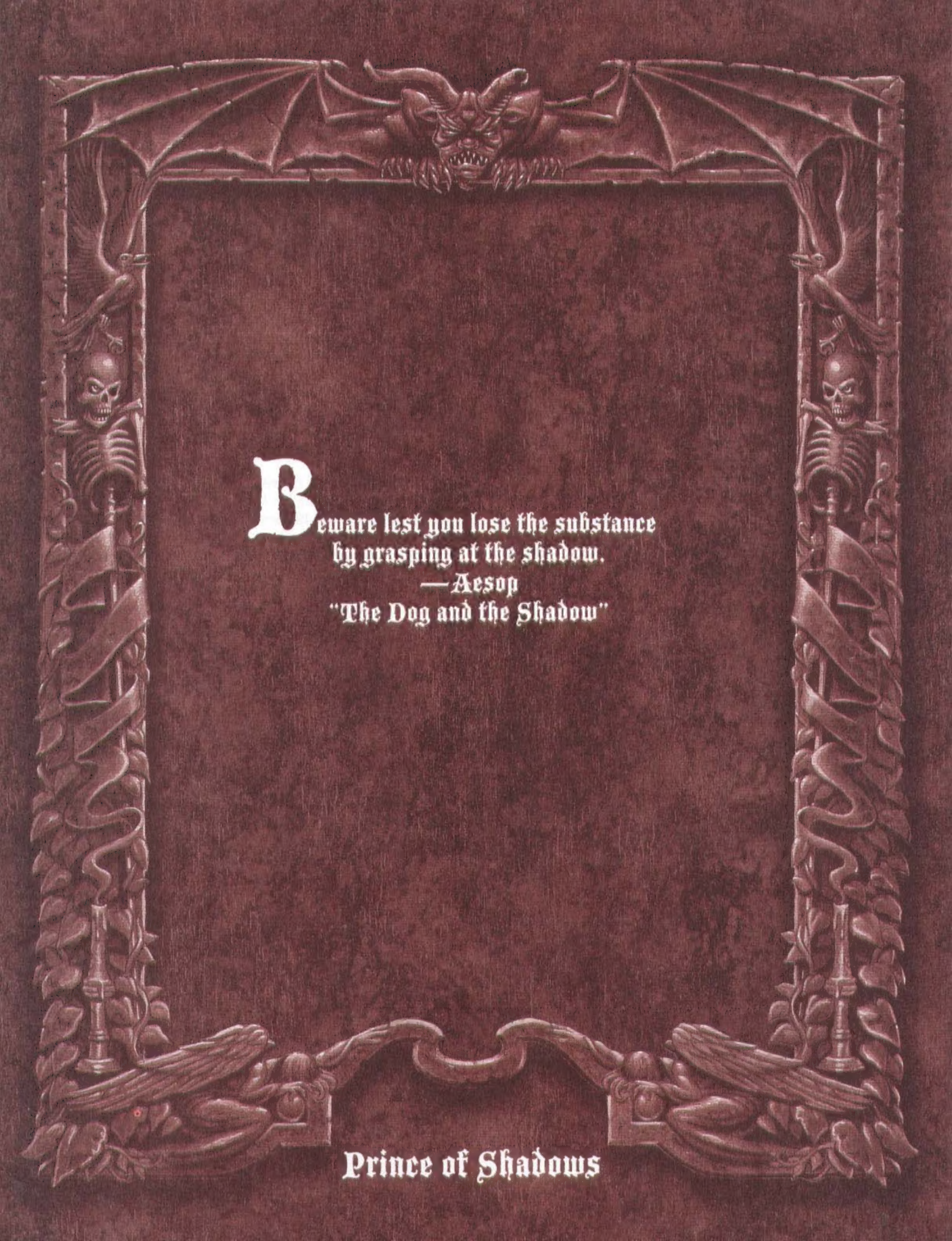


Beware lest you lose the substance
by grasping at the shadow.
—Aesop
"The Dog and the Shadow"

Prince of Shadows

Introduction

Ever since the Grand Conjunction shook the geography of Ravenloft, explorers of the Demiplane of Dread have marveled at the Shadow Rift. This gaping wound stands at the very heart of the Core domains and defies all efforts to understand its origins or explore its depths.

Now, in this adventure, heroes will at last have a chance to learn what mysteries the dim vapors of that fantastic canyon conceal. With a great deal of luck, they may even survive long enough to return to the outside world and tell others what they have seen.

What Has Gone Before

This adventure is designed to be used in one of two ways: The heroes can experience the events in *Prince of Shadows* either after completing the RAVENLOFT® module *Servants of Darkness* or as an independent adventure. Neither is inherently preferable over the other, so the Dungeon Master is free to use whichever method best suits his or her RAVENLOFT campaign.

Servants of Darkness

For those groups who played *Servants of Darkness*, the *Prince of Shadows* adventure serves as a continuation of the events depicted in that module. Since it is virtually impossible to predict just what player characters will say and do, it is quite possible that the earlier adventure may have ended up with the *Sword of Arak* in the hands of a player character rather than Prince Loht. Should such a contingency arise, the Dungeon Master should adjust resulting departures from the written text to smooth over any inconsistencies. Remember that possession of the legendary item will attract much unwanted attention from the shadow elves, who will be aghast to see such a venerated object in the hands of mere mortals.

Late Beginnings

If this adventure is being used independently, the Dungeon Master will not have to worry about the possible results of the player characters' previous actions. Sufficient information should be available through the course of the adventure to make up for any gaps in the heroes' knowledge of past events as detailed in *Servants of Darkness.*

Running This Adventure

Prince of Shadows is designed for four to six player characters of 7th to 9th levels. In order to battle the shadow elves, the heroes will need magical weapons of at least +1 enchantment.

To run this adventure effectively, the Dungeon Master will need the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome, the *RAVENLOFT® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendices*, and *Domains of Dread.*

In addition, this adventure contains several optional encounters that utilize monsters from the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volumes One, Two,* and *Three.* For ease of play, their combat statistics are presented in this book as well.

In this adventure, the heroes descend into the heretofore unexplored region of the Shadow Rift. The characters will be isolated in this alien environment where they cannot even begin to predict what dangers lurk around them. The Dungeon Master should carefully play up the unique atmosphere and strange creatures that the heroes will encounter in this Mist-filled chasm.

The touchstone of this adventure is eeriness. The Shadow Rift is not some blood-splattered charnel house nor a typical "dungeon." Instead, it is a land apart, strange rather than malevolent. Parts of it are exceptionally dangerous, and certainly many of its inhabitants have no love for mortals. Trespassers should proceed with caution, yet the heroes should continually have the sense that they are peripheral to events and that the inhabitants are largely wrapped up in their own unfathomable affairs to which they will return as soon as the intruders have departed. Only thus can the sense of mortals briefly crossing these immortals' stage be conveyed.

Adventure Summary

In refereeing any adventure, an element of risk always exists for the Dungeon Master. Despite all careful planning, he or she cannot possibly anticipate all the possible actions that the players may undertake. With that in mind, the following summary indicates the most likely course for the players to take in this adventure.

Briefly, Act One begins when the heroes stumble across a town that seems filled with sleepwalkers. They eventually learn that the village has been attacked by "dancing men" and may, if they linger too long, get to experience such an attack themselves. The rest of the act concerns their attempts to discover the purpose of these attacks, eventually tracing them to the mysterious shadow elves.

Act Two follows the heroes as they brave the unknown challenges of the shadow elves' homeland, the mysterious Shadow Rift, journeying to that strange land in an attempt to recover an artifact known as the *Crown of Arak* before it falls into the hands of an old enemy of theirs known as the Prince of Shadows.

Act three is a race against time as the heroes struggle to stop the Prince of Shadows from opening a dimensional gate in the Shadow Rift that will allow something even the shadow elves fear to come into Ravenloft from the Demiplane of Shadow. Arriving at the crucial moment, their intervention determines the success or failure of the Shadow-Prince's plot and decides which of three possible powers is dominant in the Shadow Rift at the end of the adventure.

The background events that underlie this adventure can be found in the Appendices of this book, along with descriptions of the artifacts, major personalities, and races that will be encountered over the course of the campaign. Dungeon Masters wishing for more information should consult these sources, plus the glossary, for explanations to any puzzling references.

The Inquisitor's Reports

Old Gaffer Whitten's Statement: "There wer b't'rflies. A yard across, they were. 'N' bees as big as my hand. 'N' flowers what smelt so sweet it like 'ta turned my head like a glass of Chauncey's best bitter. Mind you, I could'a taught them a thing or two about gardenin'—if I wasn't so creaky and so blasted *old.* Did me good t'see it, it did."
—Inquisitor Hewitt's Comment to Chief Inquisitor Roe: These are Gaffer Whitten's very words, so far as I could make them out. The old man is a poor witness, but insists he "seen what he seen." Shortly after I spoke with him he stopped speaking altogether and now simply gazes dreamily out the window, smiling. I think we can dismiss this report as senile dementia.

Young Goodman Ellis's Story: "It was her, I tell you! Dancing in the woods . . . but it seemed like she didn't know me.

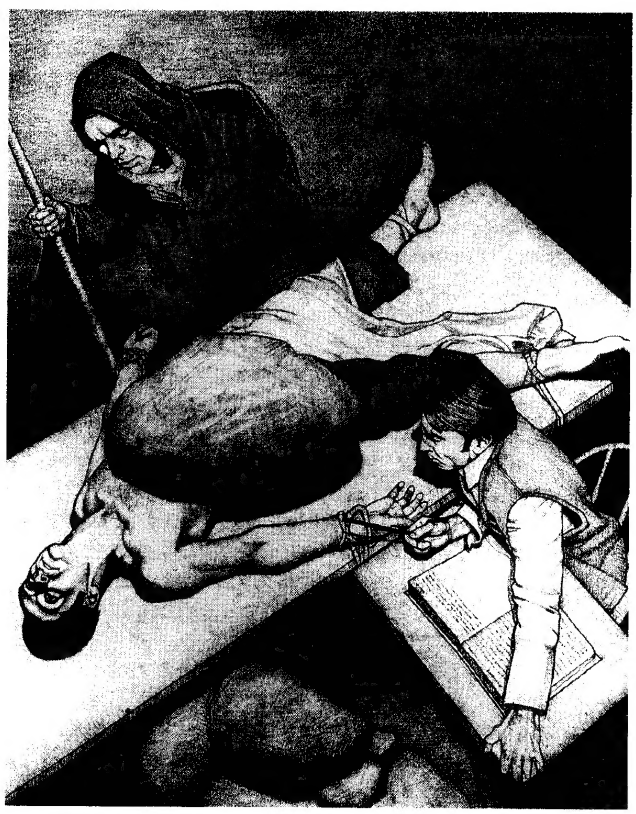
"Alright, alright; I'll try to tell it in order. I was out in the woods at night—why? Because my horse had thrown a shoe and I had to get off and walk him if I didn't want the poor animal to go lame, that's why. And the walk back took longer than I'd thought it would, and I got benighted. There wasn't any moon, and it was dark as pitch under those trees. Then I saw it. A sort of glimmering, shimmering patch off to my left. I went toward it—why? Because I'd got myself lost and thought it might be a cottage or something, with the light muted by curtains on the windows or something of the sort. But it wasn't that at all. No, nothing like. It was a clearing, and in it was these ladies. Dancing. I never seen such dancing, not in all my born days. And when they passed close by me, I could see that one of them was Melissa! Clear as day, not ten feet from me. I wish I'd jumped forward and grabbed hold of her and got her away from them, but it was like I couldn't do nothing but stand there and stare, I was that surprised. Then I let out a cry and ran after them, and—whoosh!—they was all gone. Vanished like a snuffed candle. I ran about in the woods for hours calling her name, but it wasn't no use. She was gone again. And I know I've lost her forever this time.

"There. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it."
—Inquisitor Cobb's Comments to Chief Inquisitor Roe: I did the best I could with this impenitent and recalcitrant witness. Not only does he openly boast of this encounter with the fey, in which they clearly bewitched him, but he repeatedly states his regret that he did not join in their ungodly bacchae and have closer consort with the evil vision they sent to delude him. I recommend seven days in the stocks at least to humble his too-worldly spirit and bring him back to a proper appreciation of the real world.
—Chief Inquisitor Roe's Comment: I remember Melissa's sad decline and her death very well. I now recall that her family said that she "hadn't been herself" those last few months. Listless and vague, quite unlike her usual self. I may have to consider moving the body to unconsecrated ground.

Goody Hespra's Story: "It looked like a man, but its skin was all white—white as milk. It was all dressed in black, with a sword by its side—not a proper sword, mind you, but a skinny little needly thing. And when it looked at me—lor!—my heart leapt into my mouth and my knees turned to butter. I sez

to myself, "feets, don't fail me now," and I took off running like the Black One hisself were right behind me. All the time, I's praying and calling on blessed luck to save me. Guess it heard m' prayers, 'cause I got clean away. But *lordy* I'm never going back into them woods again o' a moonless night, even if the cow does get herself lost."
—Inquisitor Jocelyn's Report: We all know that Goodwife Hespra is a godfearing woman. I see no reason not to accept her story at face value; I think we should praise her for shunning the fey and all their dark works, and I suggest this as an appropriate topic for your next sermon.
—Roe's Annotation: duly preached the next Highday.

Inquisitor Jankin's Report: . . . As you know, we found the stranger wandering in the woods along the road. He could give no account of himself and seemed dazed, hardly aware of our questions. In short, he showed every sign of being elf-shot. Per your instructions, we put him in the press and questioned him again. He seemed to show no distress and ignored all our questions and injunctions for him to confess and purge his soul as if we had not even been there. He finally expired on the eighth day, still unconfessed. As is usual with such cases, the body will be buried staked in a crossroads where the spirit, if it rises, will be unable to find its way back to trouble us.



Nashe's Story: "I swear I didn't do it. I swear. It was just like I told you. We was out in the woods hunting, Rafe and me, and all of the sudden he falls down. It was dark, so I couldn't rightly see, but it seemed to me that he was thrashing around on the ground like he was wrestling with something I couldn't see, or mebee a whole nest of somethings. Anyway, he kept yelling 'Get 'em off me! Get 'em off me!' over and over, till suddenly if sounded like he choked on somethin'. Anyways, I had me axe with me, so I heaved it up over my shoulder and took a mighty swing. And I hit something. The ground was boiling with 'em, but I couldn't rightly see what they were. After a bit it got quiet, though, so I got out my flint and steel and got a light going. The ground was all tore up awful and there was no sign of Rafe, but there was this ugly little fellow lying stretched out on the dirt. I reccon my axe'd got 'em good. Anyway, I could see that I'd have to wait for morning but I didn't worry none—if they came back for me, I'd just whomp them with my axe like I done before.

"Well, morning came, though it sure took it's time about it. And then the oddest thing happened. That little man's body, it just caught fire and burned away. So I came back into town to tell people what happened, and that's when you folks 'rrested me. And I still don't see why; I *told* you what happened to Rafe. I wasn't me that did him in, it was those little ugly fellers."
—Inquisitor Paynim's Comment: A sad case. Obviously he did in his partner and then concocted some wild story blaming it all on the fey, with his "evidence" conveniently burning away in the morning light. I recommend this murderer go to the stake, and without any of the usual palliatives.
—Chief Inquisitor Roe's Comment: Agreed.

Hobbin's Tale: "Y'see, first I heard these voices—one real quiet and whispery and the other, a lady's, sorta hissy like something was wrong with her tongue. Yes, it was a lady's voice—no mistaking that. Full o' fancy words I couldn't' rightly understand. Anyway, it sounded like they was sparkin'—begging your pardon, courtin'—and I got to wondering just who it could be carrying on out in the middle of the woods at that time o' night. A man with three daughters can't be too careful, y'know. So I creeps up, quiet as I can, and what do you suppose I saw? It was nothing but a snake and a turtle—'n' they was *talking.* I knowed then it weren't canny. So I made off as quiet as I could. That's all I saw, and that's the honest truth."
—Inquisitor Walther's Comment: Further investigation showed that Hobbin had been sampling good Mistress Wickham's ale before his moonlight walk; doubtless his tale would be more sober if he himself had been so!

The second before the sun went out we saw a wall of dark shadow come speeding at us. We no sooner saw it than it was upon us, like thunder . . . . It was as if an enormous, loping god in the sky had reached down and slapped the earth's face.

—Annie Dillard
"Teaching a Stone to Talk"
Total Eclipse

Act One
Grasping at Shadows

Scene One: Briggdarrow

It is long and hard and painful to create life: it is short and easy to steal the life others have made.

—George Bernard Shaw
Back to Methuselah

In this scene, the heroes are introduced to the citizens of Briggdarrow, most of whom have been stripped of their shadows and transformed into changelings. This scene begins as the heroes ride into town late in the evening.

Recent Events

Prince of Shadows begins with the players coming into the village of Briggdarrow in Tepest. Located on the western shores of Lake Kronov, this little fishing village is of virtually no importance to anyone in the outside world.

Three days ago, as the sun vanished behind the treetops, a legion of muryan and a pack of hell hounds attacked Briggdarrow. Without warning, these evil creatures charged out of the woods from the west, baying and howling with the thrill of the hunt.

Over the course of the next hour, as the remaining light dwindled to darkness, the shadow elves hunted the inhabitants of the village. The captured villagers were then taken to the local church, where they were tempted with faerie cake; those who succumbed had their shadows torn from them. Without their shadows, the villagers were stripped of their humanity and transformed into changelings (see page 151). When the muryan retreated back into the darkness from whence they had come, the village of Briggdarrow was inhabited by men and women who wandered about in a vague mockery of true life.

Getting Started

This is the first scene in the adventure and, as such, requires no special preparation. A few tips on how to get things rolling, however, are in order. Most of all, the Dungeon Master should give the heroes a reason to be traveling through this area. While there are many possibilities, the following paragraphs list the most likely ones.

Servants of Darkness

If the heroes have experienced the adventure *Servants of Darkness*, then the characters are simply on the trail of Loht, their mysterious nemesis in that scenario. A good rule of thumb is to assume that about three months have passed since the characters participated in that adventure. Thus, the players feel the satisfaction of picking up a trail that they may have thought long cold and forgotten. Even more important, the muryan raids show that the paranoia the people of Tepest demonstrated toward the fey in that adventure is not totally without warrant after all.

One effective way to make sure that the raided town has full effect is to change the setting from Briggdarrow to one of the villages the heroes visited in the earlier adventure, either Viktal or Kellee. Or perhaps the heroes are escorting some of the characters involved in the earlier adventure, either Lorelei or Ivan and Bryonna, to a new home. Finally, Rima can send them to this small village to investigate possible methods of destroying the *Eye of Vhaeraun*.

Other Options

If this adventure is being run on its own, the Dungeon Master can introduce any number of possible motivations to bring the characters into Briggdarrow. The characters may be hired to deliver a message to someone in the village, perhaps from a relative in one of Ravenloft's larger cities. If this tactic is used, the patron who hires the characters should be a trusted friend or relative from a previous adventure. The use of such a character gives the heroes a bit of a motivation when they discover that something is wrong in Briggdarrow.

Perhaps the best option is to make the visit to the little village nothing more than a stopping point on a longer journey. Its insertion into a lull in an already existing plot line may well catch the players totally off guard when things take a dark turn in Briggdarrow. Their later discovery of Loht's involvement would then be an added bonus once they begin to peel away the layers of the onion and discover the fey's purpose.

First Impressions

Once the Dungeon Master has decided exactly how to introduce the adventure into his or her RAVENLOFT campaign, things can get started. Read or paraphrase the following text to the players when their characters first ride into the village of Briggdarrow shortly before sunset. If the heroes arrive at some other hour, the Dungeon Master should make minor changes to the narrative to accommodate the altered timing.

The welcoming smell of woodsmoke fills the air as you follow the road out of the woods. Before you, a small cluster of thatch-roofed homes clings to the murky shores of Lake Kronov. A more pleasant change from the damp chill of the forest would be difficult to imagine.

As you approach, a battered sign in the shape of a slender fish bids you welcome to the village of Briggdarrow.

Second Thoughts

At first, the heroes notice nothing amiss in the small village. A good many folk move about in sight, each pursuing a specific task. Several fishermen carry baskets containing the day's catch up from the shore, a number of cooking fires offer the tantalizing promise of a communal meal, and various craftsmen work to repair wagons or other objects.

In a few minutes, however, it becomes apparent that no one takes any interest in the heroes' arrival. Anyone they hail goes about his or her business, ignoring them as if deaf. The heroes will almost ride down one woman who steps right in front of them as she crosses the street, seemingly oblivious to their presence. Everyone seems to be avoiding eye contact—something players may initially put down to the fact that the people of Tepest are superstitious and very distrustful of strangers. Yet their manner is not furtive but abstracted, as if each were deep in thought. It should not be too long before the heroes conclude that something is seriously amiss. When that happens, the Dungeon Master can read the following narrative aloud, adjusting as necessary:

As the minutes pass, it becomes more and more obvious that something is very wrong in the village of Briggdarrow. The people of this place seem inattentive, almost dazed. Their unblinking eyes stare at their chosen tasks without any interest. Their work is slipshod and careless. If it were not for the fact that the townsfolk are clearly drawing breath, one might think that this place was inhabited by the living dead. As it is, you have the odd feeling of being the only people awake in a townful of sleepwalkers.

Any attempts to converse with the townsfolk fail. Not even the threat of injury or actual violence snaps these poor people out of their dazed state. Only the return of their shadows can free them from the torpor that possesses them.

Should the heroes attempt to use magic on the townsfolk, they learn very little. A *detect magic* or similar spell reveals no trace of magical energies. *Detect charm*, however, indicates the presence of some kind of enchantment.

After the heroes have had a few minutes to puzzle over the unusual nature of Briggdarrow's silent inhabitants, the time has come to present them with a bit of very disturbing evidence. Although the following text can be read aloud, it should be addressed to the player whose character has the highest total Intelligence and Wisdom scores:

At first, you are aware only that something is nagging at your senses. Apart from their behavior, there seems to be nothing amiss about the people of Briggdarrow, but then again . . .

Gradually, the horrible truth begins to dawn on you. In the flickering light of cooking fires and the fading glow of the sunset, you realize that not a single one of the townsfolk casts a shadow!

Exploring the Town

The heroes will certainly want to search the town to some extent. They might just want to wander around a bit, or they might want to start a careful, systematic examination of the place. In either case, the Dungeon Master can use the map of Briggdarrow on page 24 and the key that follows it for this part of the adventure. Note that, as is not uncommon with small isolated communities, many of the merchants and craftsmen in Briggdarrow possess skills in more than one field, although their talents are always related. For example, the tailor who keeps his shop in area 15 is also a skilled cobbler.

Each of the following entries begins with a bit of boxed text that can be read aloud to the players, describing the interior of building or the impression that the heroes have when they first enter a place. For exterior sites, like the spring or waterfront, these descriptions detail the area in general.

1. East Timori Road

The hard-packed, ocher ribbon of the East Timori Road stretches from here into the looming darkness of the forest. The sounds of crickets and other insects drift through the air as the sweet smell of night-blooming flowers encircles you. In the distance, the howls of hungry wolves hint at the dangers hiding within those darkened woods.

The eastern side of the map shows where the heroes begin the adventure. The western edge has the route which the muryan used when they attacked Briggdarrow.

2. General Store

Stepping through the door into this well-lit store, you are surrounded by an assortment of household provisions. Bundles of rope lie in one corner, an assortment of basic tools hangs on the pegs near the door, and bundles of candles dangle beside an open window.

The keeper of this general store is seated on an uncomfortable-looking chair opposite the door. He is a sallow-faced man wearing simple clothes and a leather apron. His salt-and-pepper hair is cut short, and his face is dusted with stubble that could never become a full beard. Despite a bell that rings crisply when you enter, the merchant stares blankly ahead, taking no notice of you at all.

Normally, the general store is something of a cultural center for the people of Briggdarrow. Nearly everyone stops by here two or three times a week to buy candles or lamp oil, replace a broken tool, or purchase some other everyday item.

Within reason, the heroes are able to find most common items here if they look for them. The cash box holds one gold coin, two dozen silvers, and forty copper pieces. A small notebook is tucked inside the cash box as well; its pages note how much various townsfolk owe for things they have bought on credit.

3. Church

This is a simple church, exactly what one would expect to find in a small village like Briggdarrow. Near the front of the building, beneath a wicker dome, stands a stone statue of a muscular man with wise but kindly features. The fact that he wears seashell armor and holds a trident with a fish impaled upon it comes as no surprise in this humble fishing community.

Something strange has clearly happened here, however. All of the chairs, which would normally allow the faithful to sit before the altar and statue, have been cast into a haphazard pile around it. In their places, dozens of spent, black candles cover the wooden floor. Although these are not evenly distributed, none is closer than about three feet to another. Scattered around these ominous blobs of dark wax are some strange black crumbs.

This church is sacred to Manannan mac Lir, the Celtic god of fishermen and the sea. It is his will, the people believed, that kept the avanc (the monster that lurks within Lake Kronov) at bay. Indeed, this belief may hold some grain of truth, for the moment they stopped praying to him, the avanc again became active.

No danger awaits the heroes here, but in exploring this place, they may learn something of the mysteries that have befallen Briggdarrow. The blobs of wax are the remains of the magical candles used by the muryan to claim the shadows of the townsfolk. The muryan dragged each townsperson they captured to this place tempted him or her with faerie cake (hence the crumbs).

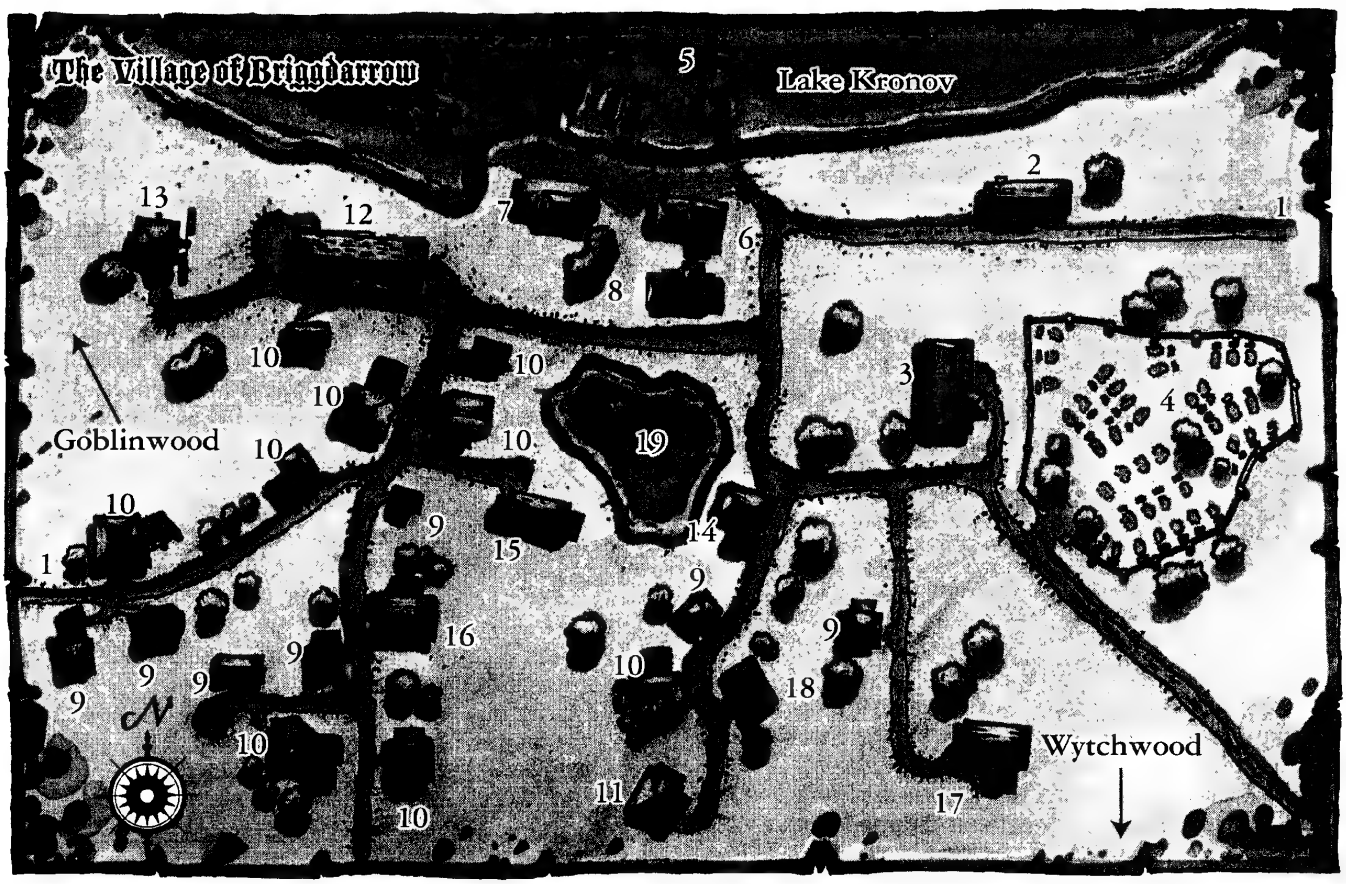
An examination of the candles reveals that not a single one of them was extinguished before it had burned itself out. A *detect magic* or similar spell reveals that a residue of enchantment hangs around the candles. It should also be possible for any character with above-average Intelligence and Wisdom scores to note that the candles were crafted from some unusual type of wax, unlike anything the player characters have ever seen before.

The crumbs also prove to be magical, radiating an aura of enchantment. As with the candles, anyone who has above-average Intelligence and Wisdom scores senses that these cakes are unlike any they have ever seen before. If the heroes have any reasonable means of determining it, they learn that the cakes and candles are composed partially of shadows. Any character who eats even the tiniest crumb must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or fall into a deep slumber, similar to that caused by a *sleep* spell. That character henceforward suffers all the effects of having eaten faerie food (see page 159) and is also vulnerable to the sith's shadow-stealing attack (see page 149).

4. Graveyard

This field is a quiet, country cemetery hedged in by an iron fence and dotted with yew trees. An assortment of tombstones, many bearing the glyph of a leaping fish, jut out from the green grass like the scattered teeth of an old man.

At first, this might appear to be a quiet place. Bats and night birds flit above it, whirling to and fro in the shimmer of a flaxen moon. Then, however, you notice that many of the graves have been disturbed. Whoever these grave robbers were, they took no steps to hide their passage. Nearly a score of coffins were drawn from their resting places and broken open. You see no trace of the poor souls who once slept peacefully beneath this green grass.



On the second night, while the muryan searched high and low for survivors of their first attack, a party of sith also entered Briggdarrow. They came to this place and dug up as many graves as they could (nineteen to be exact). The corpses within were then enchanted, causing their spirits to rise and join the saugh, the host of the unquiet dead.

Not all of the corpses who were taken from their graves have left this place, however. The sith left a handful of spirits to haunt this place to discourage those who might follow them. As the heroes explore the graveyard, these creatures attack them. The Dungeon Master can begin this encounter with the following text.

In the distance, an owl hoots as if in warning, and a wolf calls out to the night. Shafts of scintillating moonlight fall upon the graveyard and flash upon rows of tombstones.

Here and there, where this radiance touches unopened graves, something moves. Manlike shapes of shimmering light rise from beneath the soil. A cold breeze blows across and through you, causing the hair on the back of your neck to rise. You are in the presence of something unnatural, something that defies the clutches of the grave, something that hungers for the essences of the living.

These unliving creatures are gossamers, a type of saugh described in full in Appendix Four at the end of this book.

Gossamer (5): AC 0; MV fly 12 (A); HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (touch); SA surprise, energy drain; SD wraithform, hit only by +1 or better magical weapons, spell immunities; SW may be turned; SZ M (6′ tall); ML fearless (19); Int average (9); AL NE; XP 2,000 each.

Notes: *Surprise*—Opponents receive a –2 penalty on surprise rolls. *Energy Drain*—On a successful attack, the gossamer swoops through opponent, inflicting 1d8 points of damage and draining 1 point of Constitution. Victims regain lost Constitution points at a rate of one per day. *Wraithform*—Gossamers swoop about, darting through solid walls and plunging into the ground to confuse their enemies. *Spell Immunities*—Gossamers are immune to mind- and life-affecting spells, *charm*, *sleep*, *hold*, poison, and disease.

The gossamers attack until destroyed, having been commanded by their Arak masters to slay any who stumble upon their deeds.

The Last Sleeper: Of the coffins broken open in this place, all but one has been stripped of the corpse that lies within. If the heroes are diligent in their search of the graveyard, they still note this fact only after they have dealt with the gossamers.

This unusual casket holds the badly decomposed body of an old woman. In life, she was a priestess of the sea god Manannan mac Lir. So holy was this woman that the magic of the Arak could not taint her spirit. Around her neck is a silver chain of great craftsmanship from which hangs a pendant in the shape of a leaping fish. This was her holy symbol, but it also has special powers that could be of use to the party later on in the adventure. However, grave robbing is dangerous in the Demiplane of Dread, and whoever takes the pendant must make a powers check. (Rules on powers checks appear in Chapter Seven of *Domains of Dread*.)

Holy Symbol of Manannan mac Lir—This magical pendant is fashioned of silver and cast in the shape of leaping fish. While any chaotic or lawful character who touches this treasure suffers 2d4 points of burn damage each round, those of neutral alignment find it valuable indeed. Any such person who holds or wears this token can breathe water as naturally as air. It also allows him or her to move and attack as if wearing a *ring of free action*, though only as regards aquatic movement.

5. Waterfront

You stand on the shores of Lake Kronov, a dark body of cold water that stretches off to the west. Wooden piers jut out from the rocky coast to meet the choppy waves. A dozen small fishing boats are tied here, each burdened with nets and lines but bereft of any crew.

No danger awaits the heroes in this place unless they opt to board one of the fishing vessels and set out across the lake. If they do this, they undoubtedly encounter the dreaded avanc. This terrible meeting is described in "Scene Two: Lake Kronov."

6. Shipwright

This large building is clearly used for building and repairing fishing boats and other such craft. The sweet smell of sawdust hangs in the air, fighting for mastery over the thick odor of fish and bait.

A trio of men move slowly about this place, hammering, shaping, and cutting. Their work is slow, however, and slipshod at best. Not one of them shows the slightest interest in his labors.

An examination of the boat on which the men are working reveals that it is far from seaworthy. A hole in the bottom, cut there when the craft fetched up against a jagged rock, has been patched with a plank and nails, leaving great gaps for water to rush in. Only a fool would trust this craft to the waves.

Apart from the many tools of the shipbuilder's trade, the characters find nothing of value here.

7. Carpenter/Barrelwright

Saws, lathes, hammers, and nails are all readily available here. Well-crafted furniture once stood for sale, but it has been overturned and scattered. A triangular stack of barrels, all freshly made and unstained, awaits customers along the back wall.

A tall, solidly built man works at the turning of a table leg here. His attention seems to be elsewhere, however, for he works the lathe in as uneven and inept a fashion as you could possibly imagine.

This is a well-stocked carpenter's shop, but its proprietor also serves as a cooper, or barrelwright. Like all the folk of this community, he has fallen under the curse of the changeling. Having no need for sleep nor rest now, he works endlessly in his shop. One by one, he places a piece of wood on his lathe, sets it turning, and then carves away at it until it grows so thin that it breaks and flies into splinters. He then stoically begins anew on a fresh piece, with the same results.

8. Smokehouse

This building, although it still stands, has been gutted by fire. Judging by the shape of it and what remains of the interior, it was a smokehouse used for curing the fish drawn from Lake Kronov. The fire must have been at least two days ago, however, for these ruins appear cool now.

Looking over the scorched timbers and half-melted windows, it becomes clear that this blaze was a deadly one. Four blackened skeletons can be seen within, apparently half-buried when the roof of the smokehouse fell in.

As you look closer at the rubble, it becomes apparent that hot spots still exist within. A wisp of smoke here and a hint of glowing coals there catch your attention.

The smokehouse was accidently set alight by the muryan when they attacked the town. The men who were trapped in this place were not allowed to escape, so the leaping flames became a pyre that consumed them all.

If the heroes do not poke about in the ruins of the smokehouse, they are not bothered. Should they set foot amid the ash and debris, however, the vengeful spirit of one of the men who died here attacks them. When that happens, the Dungeon Master can read the following description aloud.

As soon as you step into the charred ruins, you catch the sight of a shimmering face which smolders like searing embers. Turning to look more closely at this strange sight you discover . . . nothing. Perhaps it was only a trick of the light in this gloomy place.

When you turn your head back, you again see the faintly glowing face. As it approaches, you know this is no illusion.

In death, one of these poor men became a vengeful rushlight. Unwilling to give up his battle against those who attacked Briggdarrow, this flaming spirit seeks to destroy any intruders who come near his body. For a full description of the rushlight, see *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium® Appendix III.*

Rushlight (1): AC 4; MV fly 18 (A); HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA ignition; SD hit only by +1 or better magical weapons, partial invisibility, spell immunity, cannot be turned; SW holy water; MR 30%; ML fearless (20); Int avg (10); SZ S (2´ diameter); AL CE; XP 1,400.

Notes: *Ignition*—The rushlight attacks by slamming into an enemy. This inflicts 3d4 points of damage and requires the victim to save vs. magical fire for each item carried. The wounds of this attack burn for an additional 2d4 points of damage in each following turn until a *dispel magic* is used to cool them. *Partial Invisibility*—Only those who try not to look directly at the rushlight can see it without magical aid. A –2 penalty is applied to all attacks made against the fleeting image of the rushlight. *Spell Immunity*—Rushlights are immune to spells that affect the body or mind as well as spells using cold and fire. *Holy Water*—Holy water inflicts 2d6 points of damage to rushlights.

The rushlight can either be overcome through combat or evaded by flight. If the heroes leave the ruins of the smokehouse, the rushlight sinks down into the earth to await the coming of the next intruder.

9. Small Private House

The houses of Briggdarrow have been divided into two types: small and large. In general, they have many things in common and need not be singled out for description. A small private house is assumed to serve as the home of up to four people, usually a married couple and one or two children.

Two descriptions are provided here, the first for the exterior of the structure and the second for the interior. In both cases, the Dungeon Master should alter the details of these descriptions to make each house different and distinct.

This is a small home with whitewashed walls, a thatch roof, and a neat little yard. A slender curl of smoke twists up from a brick chimney, giving the air a tang of birch and cedar. A small garden offers a variety of beans, berries, and melons, all of which look tempting and well cared for.

There are only three rooms inside this building, a common area and two bedrooms. The former is the only one currently occupied. A young woman kneels beside the fire and turns a leg of mutton long since burnt. Her husband sits back in a comfortable-looking chair and stares blankly at his ruined meal. Two children sit at a table listlessly playing some sort of game with wooden sticks and tiles, making the same moves over and over.

As with all the people in Briggdarrow, these people are utterly lost. They cannot be engaged in conversation, provoked to combat, or frightened from their home. Indeed, if the place were to catch fire, they would make no effort to even save themselves from the flames.

10. Large Private House

Like the previous entry, this description applies to more than one place in town. Larger private houses are generally home to either more people or those of greater wealth. Because Briggdarrow is not a place with many wealthy people, the former is more likely to be the case.

Again, two descriptions are provided for this place. The first details the outside of the building, and the second illustrates the interior. As the heroes move from place to place, the Dungeon Master should make adjustments to the description, making each house unique.

This pleasant home is large and well built, with whitewashed walls, a slate roof, and a sprawling green lawn. Window boxes overflow with flowers, and a plume of sweet-smelling smoke rises from the chimney. A lush garden, thick with various fruits and vegetables, runs along one wall.

Although there are half a dozen nicely appointed rooms in this building, only the parlor is occupied. The entire family is seated at the table eating a meal of burnt fish, unwashed vegetables, and moldy bread. Their careless motions have overturned cups of water, toppled serving bowls, and generally left the table a complete mess.

As with those living in the small houses described above, these folk cannot be engaged in conversation, provoked to fight, or driven from their home. They take no action, not even to defend themselves from attack or flee from danger.

11. Blacksmith/Ironmonger

This is a surprisingly well-appointed blacksmith's shop. A large forge and bellows dominates the place, although a large assortment of iron wares, ranging from horseshoes to pots and pans, are displayed for sale.

The blacksmith, a tall and powerfully built man, labors over a great anvil. Exactly what it is that he is trying to make is difficult to say, however, for he has battered it beyond recognition. In addition, the forge to which he periodically returns it is stone cold, although the blacksmith does not seem aware of this fact.

Careful examination by the heroes reveals that the blacksmith is actually working on the blade of a large plow. As mentioned above, however, it is so twisted and battered that a great deal of effort is required to be certain of this fact.

No danger awaits the heroes in this place. In fact, they may help themselves to the various goods created by the blacksmith if they wish. Just

about any common iron item that the players ask for can be found here. The exceptions to this are weapons and armor. Briggdarrow is not a place that normally outfits adventurers, so there is little of a military nature here save for a hand axe or perhaps a large carving knife. Good-aligned characters will not, of course, steal items without leaving behind appropriate compensation.

12. Warehouse

Stepping through the large doors of this vast building, your nose draws in air perfumed with the sweet smell of fresh-cut lumber and the tangy aroma of newly fallen pine. Bundled piles of the latter lie just inside the door, secured by solid-looking chains to the wall. Stacks of the former are arranged by size further away from the door.

While no supernatural danger lurks here, those who enter the warehouse do put themselves at risk. In recent weeks, the owner of this place had begun to suspect that someone was stealing from his stores of cut lumber in the night. To prevent further theft, he purchased a brace of attack dogs. These dangerous animals have been trapped in here since the first attack two days ago and are savage with thirst and hunger, attacking 1d3 rounds after the heroes enter the warehouse. They break off the attack and whine piteously if offered water to slake their raging thirst. They readily "adopt" any of the PCs as their new master if efforts are made to befriend them; otherwise, they go wild in the surrounding woods if simply freed.

Guard Dog (2): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 10, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M (5′ long); ML average (9); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 65 each.

13. Sawmill

The stiff breeze that blows off of Lake Kronov drives the blades of this impressive windmill in a steady circle. Within this hardy stone tower, the power of the wind is used to turn a well-oiled saw and a small grindstone. Although neither is in use, both move as if their operator had just stepped away from them for a moment. Search as you might, however, you find no sign of anyone living in this place.

Barring some mishap, this place is safe enough. If someone were to fall into the mill, of course, or be hurled into the moving saw blade, the potential for serious injury clearly exists.

14. Bakery

A large stone hearth dominates the interior of this shop, which smells of bread and yeast. An assortment of rolls, loafs, and cakes are laid out for purchase, although the mold that has begun to grow on them looks less than appetizing. No fire burns in the hearth, though rolls of dough have been placed within to bake.

The baker is nowhere to be seen. Presumably, he is one of the anonymous figures that the heroes encounter inside one of the private homes (see areas 9 and 10).

15. Tailor/Cobbler/Tanner

This place, which is clearly a combination tailor's and cobbler's shop, appears to have been a scene of great violence. Bolts of cloth have been toppled and rolled partially across the floor, and a small cabinet has been smashed, scattering buttons, beads, and similar small objects around the room.

The single door from this place hangs on one hinge and shows signs of having been beaten and chopped with an axe. A thin trail of brownish residue, quite likely dried blood, runs out from under the door to vanish through a crack in the floorboards.

If a character enters the back room, he or she discovers the source of this ominous stain. Indeed, depending upon the hero's luck, he or she may even learn a great deal more. The Dungeon Master can read the following text to the players as the heroes enter the back of the shop.

The back room of this shop was used for storage. It holds bolts of cloth, racks of tailoring supplies, and a well-equipped workbench. Near the bench, beside a broken and overturned stool, is the body of a plump man with white hair. His hands are wrapped around a small axe.

The cause of this man's death is obvious enough, as you see a large hole in his chest. A large stain of dried blood has spread out around body, running out under the door through which you just entered.

If a character examines the body closely, he or she may become the victim of a corpse candle. (This unusual creature is detailed more fully in the *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III.*)

Corpse Candle (1): AC 4; MV 12, fly 24 (B); HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (flames); SA mental suggestion, affect normal fires, burning hands (1d3+12); SD spell immunity, hit only by +1 or better magical weapons; SZ M; ML steady (11); Int avg (10); AL CN; XP 1,400.

Notes: The corpse candle's special abilities are described in the following text.

Anyone who examines the body closely must make a saving throw vs. spell. If the character states that he or she is looking at the corpse's face or into its eyes, a –3 penalty applies to this roll. A successful saving throw indicates that the character notices a dim glow in the man's eyes, which soon fades away to nothing.

A failed saving throw produces a more dramatic result. If this happens, the Dungeon Master should privately read the following text to the unlucky player.

For the briefest fraction of a second, you notice a flickering light in the eyes of the dead man. Then, suddenly, these embers bloom into the grim features of an elvish countenance which laughs mockingly at you.

A brief wave of nausea washes over you, and you suddenly find yourself standing face to face with a lanky warrior clad in a kilt and wielding a flashing scimitar. His features are angular and sharp, not unlike those of an elf, but of a more sinister cast. His laughter, cold and derisive, mixes with screams of terror and agony in the distance.

You lash out with an axe that you did not realize you were holding. Although your attacker avoids the blow, the blade smashes one of the hinges on the door through which the elf has just entered. With a sharp crack, the hinge gives way, and the door falls to an odd angle.

The elf laughs even harder at your pitiful attack. He draws back his scimitar and drives it forward, running you through. A burning pain spreads out from the wound. With a gasp, you fall to your knees and then topple forward, your face slapping the wooden floor which is already slick with your own blood. Sobs escape your lips, and everything goes black.

Suddenly, you are again leaning over the body of the slain tailor, a little bit dizzy but presumably none the worse for the wear.

If the hero who experienced this flashback asks the right questions it becomes clear that he or she has just experienced the attack which killed the tailor. Although the character suffers no physical harm from the attack, he or she feels all the pain and agony of that fatal wound. (A horror check is appropriate.) The other heroes see nothing of the character's vision but do see him or her going through the motions of the tailor's last few seconds.

In the wake of this terrible experience, the hero's thoughts greatly alter. Whenever the character looks at any open fire or source of flame, he or she sees the mocking face of the muryan berserker. The same manifestation haunts him or her when he looks into steam, smoke, or even the clouds in the sky. The Dungeon Master should show the player the illustration from the muryan entry on page 145. Whenever the hero sees this vision (which ought to be several times a day), he or she feels a spark of pain from the imaginary wound. In addition, the word "revenge" whispers in his or her brain.

Once a single character has fallen under the influence of the corpse candle, others may safely look into the dead man's eyes without experiencing the trauma described previously. Indeed, they see no sign of even the faint flicker, for the spirit of the dead tailor has moved on to the body of the first player character.

In the days that follow, the hero is driven to seek revenge for the death of the tailor. As long as he or she moves toward that goal, which basically means following the course of the adventure, the character has no problems. Of course, he or she still sees the vision of the muryan face frequently, but things could be worse. . . .

If the hero does not pursue the tailor's murderer, the spirit becomes angry. After 1d4 days of inactivity on the character's part, the corpse candle begins to use its ability to *affect normal fires*. This power is similar to the spell of the same name and causes small flames to change form, plaguing the character. For example, a small tendril of flame might take the form of a snake and slip free of the hearth to coil itself around the hero's ankle. All such manifestations remain for but a single round and inflict 1d6 points of damage.

Anyone who casts a *true seeing* or similar spell notes the presence of a spectral figure riding upon the shoulders of the victim. This is the spirit of the slain tailor in its form as a corpse candle. Various spells, like *negative plane protection* and *protection from evil* drive the spirit away (removing the visions haunting the hero) for the duration of the spell. As soon as the magic fades away, however, the spirit returns. Only spells like *holy word, wish, dismissal,* and *banishment* drive the spirit away permanently. If this is done, the corpse candle returns to its body to await another potential avenger.

It is possible to attack the corpse candle with spells and magical weapons. It is difficult to do so, however, without harming its host. Furthermore, such an attack causes the creature to retaliate using a *burning hands* spell that causes 1d3+12 points of damage. (A successful saving throw reduces it to half damage.)

The face that the hero sees in his dreams is that of Mohrg, Prince of the Muryan, who led the attacks on the human villages. If any form of spell is used that allows conversation with the corpse candle, such as *speak with dead*, the only thing that it can say is "Mohrg . . . Mohrg . . . "

16. Brewer/Distiller

The interior of this place is filled with wooden kegs stacked in two pyramids. The thick scent of hops and fermentation makes the air almost chokingly humid. Shelves along the walls carry jugs marked as "ale" or "mead." A trapdoor in the center of the room presumably leads down into a wine cellar.

This place is exactly what it seems to be: a brewer's shop. There is a fair assortment of fermented stock here, but nothing of exceptional quality or interest.

Only if the heroes descend into the wine cellar do they find anything unusual here. Should one or more of them decide to open the trap door and see what lies beyond it, the following text can be read aloud.

A stout ladder descends through the trap door into the basement of the shop. The atmosphere in the cellar is cool and moist, far more pleasant than that above ground. Several shelves in this area hold perhaps a gross of wine bottles. Judging from the diversity of their labels, these vintages have been collected from many lands. This may well be a very valuable collection.

The various wines in this shop are not actually of great value, although they are drawn from all around the Core. In truth, most are of only average quality. While the owner of this shop has always fancied himself a connoisseur of wines, he really had appalling taste.

Quite by accident, however, a fine bottle came into his possession from the vineyards of Kartakass. There is enough wine in this bottle for six glasses, each of which acts as a *potion of healing*. While a routine search of this wine cellar does not reveal anything special about this bottle, a *detect magic* spell alerts the caster to its presence.

17. Public House/Inn

The Spider's Web is a nice enough establishment which seems to have been doing business for quite some time. All of the tables, chairs, and other furnishings of the place appear to be well-worn and comfortable. Brass finishings and well-polished mirrors make this place look more elegant than one would expect in so small a village as Briggdarrow.

A dozen patrons are seated around the common room, each glassy-eyed and oblivious to all that transpires around them. A half-eaten meal sits before each, although the food is clearly several days old. Flies and other insects buzz around what looks to have been fish stew, and wiggling creatures—possibly maggots, worms, or beetles—twist in the fetid meal.

Apart from the revolting nature of the food (first served three days ago), there is nothing too interesting about the Spider's Web. Heroes who poke around find tinned food that can be taken for rations, bottles of wine, and kegs of ale. Nothing that anyone would expect to find at an inn or public house is absent from this place.

18. Tinsmith/Tinker

The workbench of this place is littered with scraps of metal, an assortment of tools, and a half dozen partially completed tin drinking steins. Chairs and other tables have been overturned or smashed here, telling the tale of a brawl that took place within these walls. An overturned glass jar lies on the floor near the workbench, and a large pool of dried ink stains the floor dark blue.

The tinker saw the battle raging outside of his shop. Being an elderly man who knew that he could be of no help in fighting off the attackers, he wrote a note for any who might come upon the village in the wake of this attack. When he finished this letter, he folded it and hid it in one of the drinking steins on his bench. Anyone who looks inside any one of these tin cups finds the note, which reads as follows:

I hope that this note will fall into the hands of men, not the dread folk that have attacked our village. I do not know who or what they are, but never have I seen warriors so skilled. Even the strongest of our folk seem no match for these dancing men.

For some reason, they are taking care not to slay the fallen. When someone falls, he is dragged off by these berserkers. What foul fate might befall him later I cannot say.

I hear them coming, so I must hide this note. I will offer what resistance I can, but these limbs are old and my heart weak. I fear that I will not even live long enough to discover what happens to the captives.

Clearly, this missive describes the attack on the village by the muryan. If the heroes find it, the players may be able to piece together some of what has happened here if they explore the church and tailor's shop.

19. Pond

You stand on the shore of small pond which bubbles around a spring at its center. The water looks cool and pure. Schools of minnows, flashes of gleaming goldfish, and swaying fronds of seaweed indicate that here, at least, life is normal enough.

Although it might appear that there is nothing unusual about the pond, anyone who searches the water more carefully finds otherwise. Not too far off shore is the fallen body of a muryan warrior. She was killed during the battle and collapsed into the water. Her companions did not find her, so she was left behind.

If the heroes wish to pull the body from the water, the Dungeon Master can read the following description aloud:

The figure that you have pulled from the lake appears to be that of an elf. Although taller and more muscular than is normal for the fair folk, she has the angular features and pointed ears that mark that race. It is not difficult to see what killed this elf, for half of her red-haired skull is crushed in. The hood of the gray cloak that hangs over her breastplate and kilt is dark with blood.

Searching the body of this warrior turns up no sign of the sword that she wielded in combat. Although her armor and cloak possess no magical properties, the kilt and sporran that she wears are enchanted.

If both magical items are worn, the sporran functions as a *bag of holding* and the kilt as a *cloak of protection*. The *sporran of holding* has an interior storage capability of six cubic feet and a weight limit of fifty pounds while actually weighing only three pounds. The *kilt of protection* provides a bonus of +2 on both Armor Class and saving throws. Both items must be worn together, however, or their magical powers do not function.

Moving On

After the player characters have had a chance to search the village, the adventure can continue. Exactly when to do this is up to the Dungeon Master.

It is probably a good idea to let the heroes explore until they encounter at least two of the places that give them clues about the attack on Briggdarrow. There are four of these encounters: the church (area 3), the tailor's shop (area 15), the tinsmith's place (area 18), and the pond (area 19). If they find two of these very quickly, then the Dungeon Master might want to hold off until they have encountered a third before going on to "Kian McCollin."

Kian McCollin

After the heroes have searched Briggdarrow, they meet Kian McCollin, a young boy who has escaped

the preying of the muryan raiders. He is frightened of the heroes, however, and flees from them at first. It takes some effort on the part of the player characters to both catch the boy and persuade him that they are not going to harm him. In order to resolve the encounter with Kian, the Dungeon Master should use the map and key presented earlier in this act.

The Chase Begins

In order to begin this phase of the adventure, the heroes must be near one of the homes on the map of Briggdarrow. Since there are a lot of them, this should not be much of a problem. When the Dungeon Master is ready to begin the encounter between the player characters and Kian, he should read the following text:

As you move through the somber village of Briggdarrow, you cannot help but notice the oppressive silence that hangs in the air. All the normal sounds that form the background hustle and bustle of even the smallest human settlement are conspicuously absent here.

As you wade through this almost palpable stillness, the sudden crash of falling pans shatters the night. Out of the corner of your eye, you catch a fleeting glimpse of a halfling-sized figure peering out of a cottage window. Then, before you can see it any more clearly, it vanishes from sight.

Most characters probably attempt to pursue the mysterious figure. If they do not, then the Dungeon Master should assume that the boy gets away. Since the players have not shown an interest in following this thread of the adventure, the Dungeon Master can flip ahead to "The Dark Pack" on page 22.

Pursuing Kian

If the heroes pursue Kian, they have a frantic chase ahead of them. The Dungeon Master should keep in mind that the boy is both small and agile. Furthermore, he knows the town very well. Since he thinks he's running for his very life, he spares no effort. Kian ducks behind carts, darts around corners, and otherwise makes it extremely difficult for the heroes to catch him.

The Dungeon Master should allow this to go on for a few minutes, with a few close calls and near misses, before allowing the characters to corner the fleeing youth. When that happens, read the following text to the players:

After a long and frantic chase, you finally corner the mysterious creature that has eluded you for so long. Panting, you see before you a small boy huddled in the shadows. His clothes are torn and tattered, his face streaked with dirt, and his eyes wide with fear. Realizing that he has nowhere to run, the youth tightens his face in grim determination, and a thin-bladed kitchen knife flashes into his hand.

Obviously, no hero wants to cut down the small child, although force may be required to disarm him. Still, for a group of hale and hardy adventurers, this should be no problem. If the heroes get too rough, however, and actually harm the boy, the Dungeon Master should have them make powers checks to reflect their less-than-noble deed.

Meeting Kian

The youth is frightened and weak. He has not really had a decent meal nor caught more than a few snatches of sleep since the muryan attacked. When he first saw the heroes, he was convinced that they were the muryan returned in some deceptive guise.

Once the heroes have disarmed the lad, they can try to calm him down and find out what happened. Getting the boy to speak up, however, requires them to find a way of winning his trust. This can be done with a successful Charisma check, a *friends* spell, or some subtle psionic manipulation as well as an honest effort to win him over.

Once the boy begins to talk, he tells the story of the attack on his village. He speaks quickly, in a thick Gaelic accent.

"'Twas three nights ago when the hounds came. Black as midnight they were, with eyes like burnin' coals and breath like the fires o' damnation. All the men o' the village took up arms agin them, but 'twere no good. Swords and knives and all, nothin' could harm them."

After he gets to this point in his story, the boy is again overcome with fear. He starts to cry, and the heroes have to quiet him down again before he can continue. Once Kian calms down, he can be made to continue his story, difficult though it is for him.

"Then come the dancin' men, crazed hellions with giant swords and terrible laughs that hurt me head. When mum seen them comin', she stuffed me and my sis—that's Arla—into a pair o' barrels. After that, I heard an awful lot o' howlin' and sounds o' fightin'. It went on for hours. I guess I musta fallen asleep, or fainted, or somethin'.

"'Twas real quiet when I woke up, so I decided to crawl out of the barrel and have a look around. At first I thought ev'rythin' was okay, but then I seen the truth. Ev'ryone was actin' like they was asleep or somethin'—even me mum and dad. Then I noticed that no one had a shadow anymore. When I saw that, I run and hid, I did.

"I been hidin' ever since. When I seen you comin', I thought maybe you were more o' those wild men or mebee friends o' theirs.

"I see now that you're not like them a'tall, and I'm sorry that I give you such a long chase afore."

The Dungeon Master should have the boy pause in his tale again and give the players a chance to calm him down. Also, it gives the heroes a chance to think about his words and ask him a few questions. The following are the most likely lines of inquiry for the players to pursue.

What Happened to Your Sister? Kian dearly loves his sister and is very worried about her. He feels that it was his place to protect her and that he has failed in this charge. With that in mind, the Dungeon Master can read the following text to answer the above question:

"After I crawled out of that ol' barrel, I looked around to make sure everythin' was safe. When I seen it was, I got Arla outta her barrel. We tried to wake up me folks, but 'twere no good. That night, when the dancin' men come back, we hid again. And agin the next night too.

"We just about gi' up hope of anyone comin' to set things right. Figurin' that the dancin' men would be back, we set ourselves to decidin' what to do next. I wanted to take a boat across the lake, but Arla was afraid o' the avanc. She said that we oughta go inta the woods and try to find the White Lady. I told her she was crazy, the woods is full o' goblins, and we'd get kilt. That's when Arla and me got into a big fight.

"I haint seen her since just after noon. I think she must've gone into the woods. I guess . . . I guess I'll be going after her."

What is the Avanc? Kian knows very little about the avanc, but he is sure that it is a terrible creature that he does not want to meet. Because parents use the avanc as a sort of bogeyman to keep kids off the lake in dangerous weather or after dark, he is pretty sure that the creature is just waiting to eat him. He describes it as follows:

"What's the avanc? Sure yer not tellin' me that you hain't heard o' the avanc! 'Tis a terrible creature, some kinda dragon I'm thinkin', that lives 'neath the waters o' Lake Kronov. I've not seen it meself, but I've got friends who have, and they say 'twas the scariest thin' in the whole world. Don't let it getcha by the feet!"

Who is the White Lady? If the heroes ask about the White Lady, Kian gets a strange, mystified look on his face. He knows no more about her than he does about the avanc. Like any young child, though, he thinks he knows all there is to know.

"I've not seen the White Lady meself, but them as has say she's beautiful as a spring lily. Some of the kids in town, the little ones like Arla, think she's one of the wee folk come to live among us. They say she grants wishes to them what can find her cottage.

"Once, me mum seen her out in the forest. She had a bird on her lap, just sittin' there as quiet as can be. Mum says she seen her pettin' and talkin' to that bird, just like 'twas a person, but when she noticed someone watchin', she up and disappeared, she did."

Can You Take Us to Your Parents? It is very possible that the heroes want Kian to show them his parents. Kian's eyes brighten at the thought of that.

"I sure wish you could do somethin' for me mum and dad. They've been like the walking dead e'er since the dancin' men came to town. I don't know what to do to help 'em."

If the heroes do not think of this, Kian asks the heroes to do what they can for his parents. Unfortunately, they cannot do much. His parents are in the same condition as the other townsfolk, and the heroes can learn nothing new from them. As before, *detect magic* spell reveals nothing, although a *detect charm* spell indicates the presence of an enchantment. If the players try something unusual, the Dungeon Master must determine the results on a case-by-case basis. As a rule, however, the players should not be able to learn much about what has befallen the villagers. That comes later in the adventure.

The Dark Pack

If the heroes linger in Briggdarrow for too long, the muryan return during the night for a last search of the town. If they head out of town, the Dungeon Master should decide whether or not to use this encounter. Assuming that the heroes are fairly prompt in their investigation of the town and subsequent departure, they ought to be able to get away without facing the muryan. If they linger too long in town, however, they are probably attacked.

Of course, the Dungeon Master can also use the likes and dislikes of the group to decide the matter. If the players are likely to enjoy the battle with the muryan and their hell hounds, then this encounter should occur. If the players prefer roleplaying over battles, then this section can be left out completely.

Preparations for the Encounter

While shorthand versions of the game statistics for the muryan and their hell hounds appear later in this section, the Dungeon Master should be familiar with the complete descriptions given in Appendix Four of this book and the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome, respectively. Additionally, the Dungeon Master may find it useful to have the map of Briggdarrow at hand (see page 11).

Starting the Encounter

When the Dungeon Master is ready to begin the encounter, he or she can read the following text aloud to the players.

The cool night air is punctuated only by the cries of night birds and the distant howls of wolves. It seems that whatever menace has claimed the shadows of Briggdarrow's inhabitants has gone on to other feeding grounds. Still, there is foreboding in the air, something that promises death . . . or worse.

In the distance, a terrible baying begins to carry through the night. At first it seems to be the mundane calling of wolves, but then its more sinister and macabre tones can be heard. No earthly wolf ever made so baneful and haunting a sound.

Worse than all this, however, is the undeniable fact that these cries are drawing nearer with each passing second. Before long, they will be upon you.

Loosing the Hounds

The first wave of the muryan attack comes from their hell hounds. These fell creatures have been loosed upon the city with orders to root out any survivors of the previous attacks. It is their baying that splits the night.

After the player characters have been given a few minutes to ready themselves, whether by hiding or shoring up their defenses, the hell hounds burst from the woods east of the town. They set about their search and attack routines at once.

The Dungeon Master must decide how long it takes for the hell hounds to find them. If the heroes have taken steps to hide, they may have bought themselves several minutes of safety. If they stand in plain sight, ready to defend themselves, the hell hounds attack instantly. **Table 1** can be used as a guideline in these matters.

Table 1:
Hiding from the Hell Hounds

If the heroes are ...	The hounds find them in ...
Outdoors, in the open	1 minute
Outdoors, concealed	10 minutes
Indoors	30 minutes
Indoors, concealed	1 hour

Of course, special conditions may alter these times. If the heroes are careless and noisy, they can attract the attention of the beasts very quickly. If they are invisible or otherwise magically shielded, they double the normal time that it takes for the hounds to find them. Dungeon Masters are reminded of the fact that hell hounds can detect hidden and invisible creatures 50% of the time and that they have exceptional senses of hearing and smell.

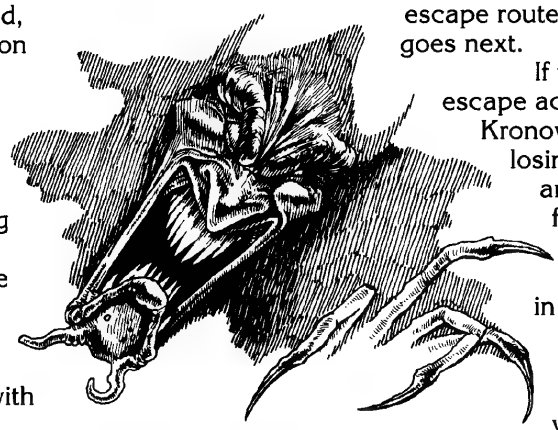
When the hell hounds finally locate the heroes, they attack at once. These creatures are not just dumb animals, so they do not fall for tricks designed to outwit hunting dogs and the like.

Hell Hound (2 per hero): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (bite); SA breathe fire (4 points), surprise (–5 to enemy surprise rolls); SD immune to fire, see hidden or invisible creatures (50%), surprised only on a 1 or 2; SZ M; ML elite (13); Int low (7); AL LE; XP 420 each.

The Dancing Men

After each round of combat with the hell hounds, there is a cumulative 10% chance that a muryan comes dancing out of the woods at the start of the next round. Thus, there is a 10% chance that one

will arrive on the second round, a 20% chance one will arrive on the third round, and so on. Following this progression, any that have not already appeared automatically arrive on the eleventh round. Note that rather than charging wildly into battle, weapons flailing, the dancing men glide smoothly and gracefully into melee, almost as if it were a game they were playing with the heroes, yet with deadly intent.



Arak, Muryan (1 per hero): AC 2; MV 15; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA spells, dance, *slow*, deafness, blindness; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, lightning, and electricity; SW mithral, sunlight; MR 15%; SZ M (5′ tall); ML fanatic (17); Int high (13); AL CN; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Dance*—Anyone struck by the muryan in melee must successfully save vs. spell or begin to dance (–4 penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class). *Slow*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or be *slowed* for the duration of the combat. *Deafness*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *deafness* spell. *Blindness*—Anyone struck by a muryan in melee must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *blindness* spell.

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*fire burst, magic missile* (×2), *shield*; 2nd—*flaming sphere, stinking cloud*; 3rd—*fireball.*

Resolving the Battle

This battle is intended to test the mettle of the player characters. The Dungeon Master should take whatever steps he needs to in order to make it a close fight, even if the heroes would normally overwhelm such creatures.

From here, the adventure can follow one of several paths, based upon the actions of the heroes and the outcome of the battle. Ideally, the muryan and their hounds prove too tough for the heroes, who are forced to retreat from Briggdarrow. Of course, heroes are renowned for their ability to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory and vice versa.

Retreat: It is possible that the heroes opt to retreat from the village of Briggdarrow. To be sure, the muryan attempt to prevent their flight, and the heroes have to come up with some means of evading the hell hounds and their masters. Assuming that they accomplish this, their choice of escape routes dictates where this adventure goes next.

If the heroes opt to make their escape across the frigid waters of Lake Kronov, they have little difficulty in losing the muryan. The dancing men are not prepared to undertake any form of nautical adventure. In the event that this happens, the story continues as described in "Scene Two: Lake Kronov."

Should the heroes opt to flee to the north, they enter the Goblinwood. This place is thick with kobolds, goblins, hobgoblins, and other such creatures who would be delighted to capture, torture, kill, and devour any group of adventurers heading their way. The events that transpire here take place in "Scene Three: Goblinwood."

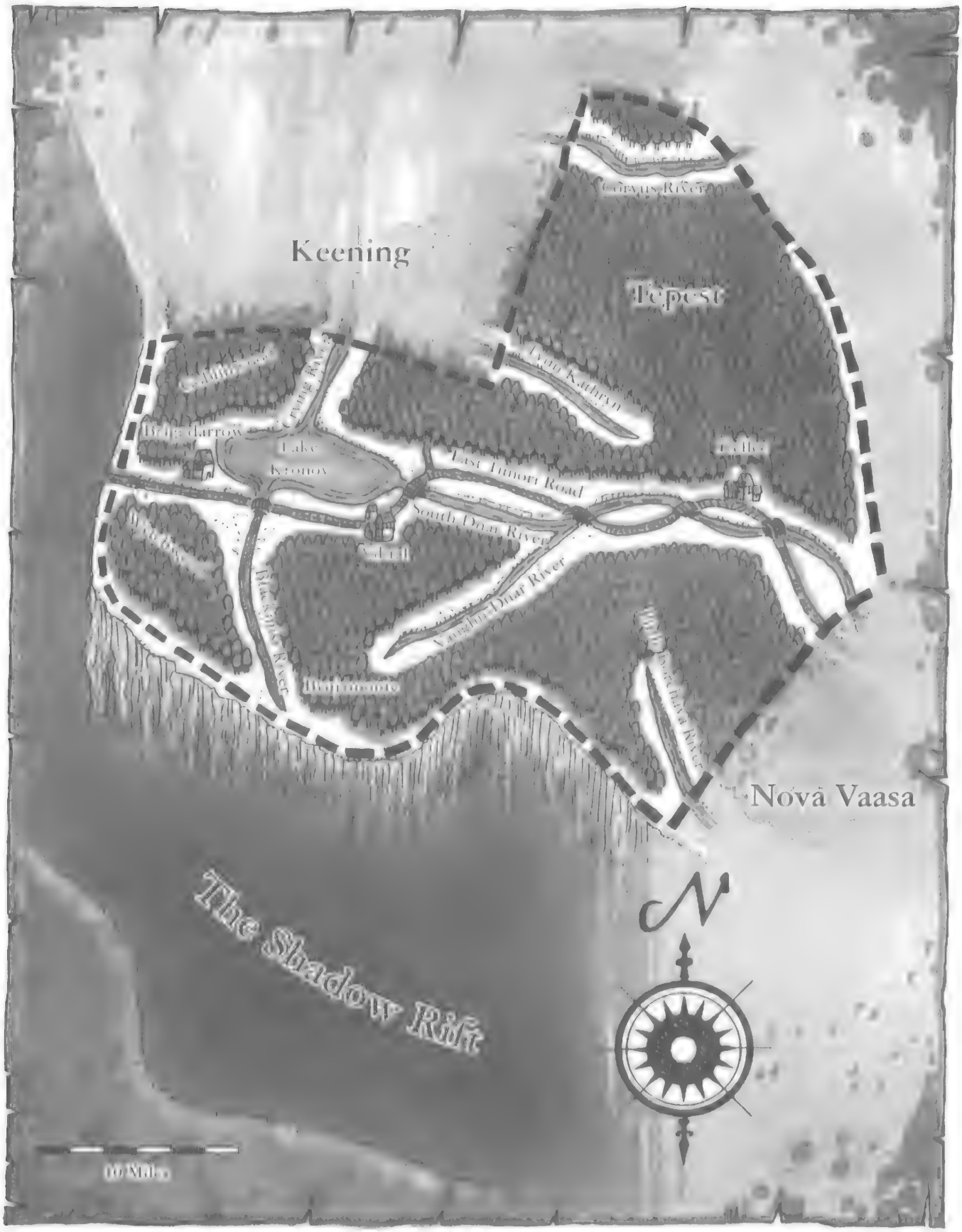
Of course, the heroes may attempt to return along the road that brought them to Briggdarrow originally. If they do this, they are pursued by the muryan and their hounds for many miles. Indeed, only when they cross the Blackmist River do their attackers break off this pursuit. At that point, however, the heroes have entered the Brujamonte and now run afoul of the dreaded Blackroot, an undead treant who rules those woods. This encounter is detailed in "Scene Four: Brujamonte."

Lastly, the heroes may opt to move southward. This is the way that Kian would prefer to travel, for it is there that he believes his sister has gone. (If the heroes search for her tracks, they find further proof of this.) Such an exodus brings them into the Wytchwood, where the White Lady lives. Unfortunately, the heroes are not the only ones searching for the White Lady, as they discover when the adventure continues in "Scene Five: Wytchwood."

Defeat: If the heroes choose to battle the muryan to the end but are unable to defeat them, they are captured. Remember, the Arak are not interested in killing them, so even those heroes who suffer what would otherwise be fatal wounds in battle are given prompt medical care by their attackers.

If some or all of the heroes are taken by the enemy, the muryan set about turning them into changelings. Details on these events are presented in "Scene Eight: Prisoners of Darkness."

Victory: It is entirely possible that the heroes defeat the dancing men. If this happens, their fate is in their own hands, as is the course of the adventure. The Dungeon Master should consult the directions given under "Retreat" earlier in this section to determine where the heroes end up when they leave Briggdarrow.


Keening
Tepest
Corvus River
Lake Kronov
East Timori Road
South Dnar River
Nova Vaasa
The Shadow Rift
N

Scene Two: Lake Kronov

Meanwhile let us cast one shadow in air or water.
—Maxine Kumin
"Turning To"

This scene depicts the events that occur if the heroes attempt to leave Briggdarrow at night by way of Lake Kronov. To be precise, it presents an encounter with the avanc, a crocodilelike beast that stalks the eastern waters of the frigid lake.

The events that follow assume that the player characters are in a boat of some sort. (A few small fishing boats can be found along the shore.) If the party opts to swim (unlikely but possible if they plunge into the icy water, hotly pursued by hell hounds and dancing men), the Dungeon Master will have to make a few adjustments.

In order to run this scene effectively, the Dungeon Master should be familiar with the game statistics for the avanc as presented in Appendix Four. The creature's combat statistics appear later in this scene, but understanding the creature's motivations can only benefit play.

The Jaws of Death

When the Dungeon Master is ready to begin playing this scene, he or she should read the following text to the players. It assumes that the heroes have already left the docks of Briggdarrow and are well away from the shore.

As your craft drifts slowly across the black waters of the lake, it is difficult to avoid feeling swallowed up by the stillness around you. Flashes of silver light shower down from the pale moon to splash across the gently rippling surface of the lake. Distant howls drift out from the unseen shore, softened by the cool night air into a relaxing melody of nature.

Then, without warning, this moment of tranquility is shattered. The boat pitches hard to one side, and despite valiant pulls at the oars it begins to twist about as if caught in the iron grip of a fierce current. Another lurch, and the sound of rushing, churning water suddenly fills the darkness. The hull creaks in protest as the choppy waters hammer the boat. From nowhere, a great whirlpool forms in the black water—a vortex that could suck your little boat down into the depths below.

The Whirlpool

The whirlpool is a product of the avanc, a terrible creature that has decided to make the heroes its next meal. It is the avanc's intent to either pull the boat beneath the waves or shatter it. In either case, those aboard it must then take to the frigid water, where it can feast upon them at its leisure.

It takes 1d6 rounds for the whirlpool to pull the ship to the center of the vortex and begin to suck it under. Heroes can attempt one seamanship proficiency check each round to try to maneuver the boat out of the whirlpool (and back toward the shore). Because the boat is nearing the center of the vortex, however, these checks suffer a cumulative –1 penalty per round. Success allows the heroes to retreat from the whirlpool and either return to shore or continue out onto the lake.

Additionally, each round that the boat is in the maelstrom, a seaworthiness check must be made (as described briefly below and at length in the AD&D® accessory *Of Ships and the Sea*). A small fishing boat has a seaworthiness rating of 14 (which means that it needs a roll of 14 or less on 1d20 to stay intact). These checks continue until the boat breaks apart or sails free of the whirlpool.

If the ship is destroyed, the whirlpool dissipates, and the heroes are left clinging to bits of debris or otherwise trying to remain afloat in the cold waters of Lake Kronov. When that happens, read aloud the following text:

As quickly as it began, the whirlpool breaks up into dozens of minor swirls which gradually spin themselves out. You are left on the still surface of the lake, trying to stay afloat as best as you can. You can feel the bitter chill of the icy water work its way into your very bones as you begin to shiver uncontrollably.

As soon as the characters begin thinking about how to avoid hypothermia, Kian cries out "Oh, lordy, it's got me by the feet!" and tries to scramble up on a piece of flotsam. Before any of the heroes can react, one of their number is suddenly pulled under the surface. The lurking avanc has grasped that character's legs in its inexorable jaws and pulled him or her under to drown.

Battling the avanc is no easy task, especially for characters who must strive to remain afloat while fighting it. Any character who does not have some special movement ability, like that bestowed by a *ring of free action* or the *holy symbol of Manannan mac Lir*, suffers a –4 penalty on all attack rolls made in the water. In addition, the heroes will not

be able to see it in the dark water; magical light sources will merely illuminate the surface. The characters must actually go beneath the surface to see it, and even then their vision only extends some thirty feet—just far enough to see it rushing to the attack. Other penalties might be imposed by the Dungeon Master, especially for characters without the swimming proficiency, as the situation merits.

The avanc retreats if it is reduced to 10 or fewer hit points. If possible, however, it attempts to drag one of the heroes off with it so that the attack is not a total loss.

Avanc (1): AC 4; MV 9, swim 12; HD 6+3; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 3d4/3d4/2d10 (bite/bite/tail, but not at same target); SA whirlpool, surprise; SD fire resistance; SZ H (20′ long); ML champion (16); Int average (10); AL NE; XP 2,000.

Notes: *Whirlpool*—Once per day, the avanc can form a whirlpool in the waters of the lake. *Surprise*—The avanc can remain absolutely motionless, allowing even vigilant scouts only a 5% chance per experience level of spotting it. When opponents get within 15 feet of creature, they make surprise rolls with –2 penalties. *Fire Resistance*—The avanc is immune to normal fire, and magical fire inflicts only half damage to it.

Survivors

After the battle with the avanc ends, the player characters are left clinging to bits of debris in the icy water. For every turn that a character remains exposed to the elements, his or her Constitution score falls by one point. If this score falls to zero, the character dies from hypothermia. Rescued characters regain these lost points at a rate of one point per hour (assuming he or she sits by a fire, is wrapped in warm blankets, etc.).

If the heroes attempt to fashion a raft from the debris of the ship, they must work fast. Making such a craft requires 1d10 turns, during which time the characters continue to suffer from hypothermia. When the craft is complete, they can climb aboard and no longer feel the effects of the cold water.

In about the same amount of time, however, the heroes can swim ashore. If the players were heading north along the shore of Lake Kronov when they left Briggdarrow, they end up in the Goblinwood. If they headed east, they come ashore east of the Blackmist River. If they voiced no such preference or simply headed straight out across the lake, the Dungeon Master should randomly determine which shoreline is nearest to them. In either case, the adventure can continue with "Scene Three: Goblinwood" or "Scene Four: Brujamonte," as appropriate.

Misadventures

It is possible that the heroes come up with some means of dispelling the whirlpool or defeating the avanc in a manner which keeps their boat intact. While this could throw the story off track and make it difficult to return to the main plot, there are a number of ways to draw the characters back into the fray.

Kian, for his part, will refuse to abandon his sister without trying to find out what has become of her and will run off at the first opportunity, no doubt drawing any heroes who deserve that title in his wake. Characters such as Wyan and Rima from *Servants of Darkness* will also urge the player characters to help the people of Briggdarrow before a similar fate befalls nearby communities. A replay of the events in Briggdarrow elsewhere along the Shadow Rift's borders might convince the heroes that things will only worsen if the situation is not dealt with promptly.

Finally, Loht himself could serve to draw the reluctant heroes back into the story. Once he learns that someone has discovered what happened in Briggdarrow, he dispatches the powrie to find them. These redcap assassins should have no trouble at all in locating and capturing the heroes. When that happens, the adventure can resume with "Scene Eight: Prisoners of Darkness."

Scene Three: Goblinwood

For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.
—William Shakespeare
King Henry the Sixth, Part III

In this scene, the heroes encounter the goblins for whom this wood is named. While these creatures are identical to those presented in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome, this section gives some tips for making this scenario more than a series of simple combat encounters.

"Scene Three" takes place at night, after the heroes have left Briggdarrow. This encounter should occur the same night as "Scene One," driving the heroes immediately into either "Scene Five: Wytchwood" or "Scene Eight: Prisoners of Darkness."

Soon after the heroes have entered the forest north of Briggdarrow, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players:

For half an hour, your trip is peaceful and uneventful. The silver eye of the gibbous moon drifts into the sky, spilling a soft luminescence onto your group. The air is cool and fresh with the sweet smell of evergreen. All around you, the darkness of the woods merges with the star-dusted expanse of the heavens to envelop you in a cool, black shroud. Owls, bats, crickets, and other creatures of the night can be heard in the background, but their voices are more soothing than threatening.

What the players and their characters do not know at this point is that they are being stalked. A group of goblins are hunting the party; this is their land, and they do not like intruders.

In a head-to-head fight, such beasts are little more than fodder for a group of seasoned adventurers. With a little effort on the part of the Dungeon Master, however, the goblins can become a real threat, teaching even the cockiest swordsman a lesson in humility.

Warning Signs

The goblin attack should be built up carefully by the Dungeon Master, with a great deal of foreshadowing prior to the actual attack. Indeed, the more tantalizing these encounters are, the better. The next few sections detail encounters that can occur before the heroes actually come face to face with the goblins.

Care should be taken to make no mention of the true nature of the foe. The Dungeon Master should never say "there are goblins moving through the woods around your characters." If the characters ever actually get a good look at the goblins, they should be described as twisted little creatures that look like "terribly deformed halflings" or "menacing little children."

Also, the Dungeon Master should not feel obligated to impose each of the following encounters on the heroes. Instead, he or she should read them over and pick out the ones that he or she feels are most effective for this particular group. When the adventurers have been sufficiently intimidated by the unknown creatures of the Goblinwood, then the adventure can continue with "Goblin Attack!"

Flame and Cross

After a bit of peaceful riding, the players come upon a clearing in the forest. Here they find the first evidence that all is not well in the Goblinwood. The following text can set the scene for the first encounter with the goblins:

You have come upon a place where the woods open up to form a jagged clearing some fifty yards across. The ground here is scorched black, and someone has scattered handfuls of salt around like birdseed, carefully covering the whole clearing with the tiny crystals. At the center of this black circle burns a haunting blue flame that stretches easily six feet into the air, sending a cobalt glow rippling across the entire area.

A short distance behind the flame stands a crudely-carved stone pillar. Balanced atop this spire to form an uneven "T" is an almost identical block of stone. Seven iron chains are looped over this crossbar, six of which supports the torn and tattered remnants of a corpse. The seventh battered body twitches feebly and moans in mortal agony as it twists slowly in the wind.

The flame and stone cross are a warning to intruders in the Goblinwood. The goblins do not take kindly to those who would trespass here, as evidenced by the corpses.

The Blue Flame: The flame may seem ominous and menacing with its blue color and lack of obvious fuel, but it is actually not too mystifying. The blue flame is nothing more than a natural gas jet that has been ignited by the goblins and left to burn. A close look reveals that the flame appears to spew forth from a hole in the ground some two inches across.

This flame can be extinguished via smothering or magical spells without too much difficulty. The problem with doing so, however, is that this allows the gas to build up to the point where it can explode. Should the fire be extinguished and the hole left unplugged, there is a cumulative 10% chance per round that any open flame triggers an explosion. Thus, there is a 10% chance the first round, a 20% chance on the second, and so forth until the 10th round, when any open flame results in a blast. The explosion of this gas is more or less like a *fireball* spell, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per round of gas build-up (with a maximum of 10d6) to everyone in the clearing. Flammable materials (including the woods around the cross) must make successful saving throws vs. normal fire or burst into flames.

The Stone Cross: An examination of the stone cross reveals nothing unusual. These two slabs of rock are, in fact, slabs of rock. They hold no hidden doors or compartments within. Further, they are not fused or fastened together in any way but are heavy enough to be very sturdy. It would take a considerable effort on the part of the heroes to topple this offensive structure.

The Rotting Bodies: Examining the bodies reveals six humans (four men and two women) and one elf. The remains of their garb indicate that they were either warriors or rogues, with one exception: The elf was quite clearly a wizard of some type. In life, these characters were a party of adventurers much like the player characters.

Read aloud the following text to heroes who investigate more closely:

A chilly breeze blows across the clearing, causing the blue flame and the shadows it throws to dance with a life of their own. The dead men and women twist silently, other than the creaking of their chains. With a low moan, the wind causes the elf to swing around until he is facing directly at you. Only then do you see the half-decayed side of his head and realize that he must have been dead for days. Then, exhaling a carrion stench that threatens to choke you, the rotting corpse speaks in a hollow voice that seems to come from a great way away.

"Look upon my tortured body and fear the name of Korag, slayer of men and destroyer of elves. Let all who enter the Goblinwood know that my fate is theirs. Had you turned back an hour ago you could have saved yourselves. But now it is too late . . . far too late."

With that, the body of the elf begins to scream in pain. So agonizing are his outcries that those hearing them must make immediate fear checks. As he thrashes about, the body begins to break up and falls into moldering pieces. After a minute or so of this cacophony of fear, nothing is left but a noisome pile on the ground.

The corpses have no valuables or other equipment on them, although close examination suggests that at least some of them died under slow torture. Korag and his followers stripped them of their belongings long before they took their lives. Questioning any of the human corpses through use of a *speak with dead* spell or similar dweomer requires a powers check and elicits no information other than a piteous request from the corpse to be taken down and given decent burial; if the heroes comply, the body screams and putrefies in the same fashion as the dead elf.

Snares and Traps

The goblins who live in this place are nothing if not devious. As such, they have placed a number of traps in the forest. The following examples illustrate the types of traps created by the inhabitants of the Goblinwood.

Spikes Ahoy: This trap must be sprung while the players are moving through the forest. When the Dungeon Master begins this encounter, he or she should randomly determine which of the heroes sets off the trap, call for a saving throw vs. breath weapon, and then read the following text aloud to the player if the roll is failed:

Suddenly, the quiet of the forest is broken by the rustling of leaves. For a split second, there appears to be something serpentine rushing away from you, but then the truth becomes apparent. With a loud snap, a loop of rope closes around your ankle and pulls you off your feet. You fall, but never hit the ground as this powerful snare easily yanks you upward. Everything is a blur of motion as the forest is turned upside down and you are hurled through the air. Before you can react or

even cry out, you see a wall of crude, wooden stakes rushing toward you.

Being impaled on these spikes is, obviously, very painful. In addition, it inflicts quite a bit of damage. Exactly how badly the trap injures the character is determined by the type of armor he or she wears, as indicated on **Table 2**.

Table 2:
Spike Trap Damage

Armor	Damage
No Armor	5d6
Leather/Hide Armor	4d6
Metal Armor	3d6

These stakes are smeared with a nasty greenish mud. They are not poisoned, but the players do not know that. In fact, it is probably a good idea for the Dungeon Master to instruct the player whose character has been impaled to make a saving throw vs. poison. A really nasty Dungeon Master could even impose a –4 penalty on this meaningless check, just to make the player nervous.

Leeches, Leeches, Leeches: While the goblins are not especially intelligent, they are quite skilled at inflicting pain and intimidating their enemies. (Hey, everybody's good at something.)

As the characters walk through the woods, the Dungeon Master can randomly select one of them to trigger this trap (upon failing to save vs. breath weapon). Once the victim has been chosen, the following description can be read:

As you take a step onto what appears to be solid ground, you hear the snapping and splintering of twigs and thin wood. The next second, the ground beneath you buckles, and it seems as if the earth itself has swallowed you up. For a few seconds, you fall down a dark shaft which offers no handholds or other means of halting your descent. Then, with a splash, you land in some three feet of cold, stagnant water.

At first, this may not seem like much of a trap. The fall inflicts a mere 1d6 points of damage, and after that, nothing seems to happen. In truth, however, this trap is more than a simple pit. The goblins dug this pit (which is about twenty-five feet deep), filled it with water, and dumped in a few buckets of leeches. If the players think to have their characters provide a light for their trapped companion, the Dungeon Master should read the following text aloud:

As the light spreads out to fill the pit and roll across the murky water, the true horror of your predicament becomes apparent. Dozens of small shapes dart back and forth around your body. At first, it's easy to take them for minnows or other small fish. A closer look, however, reveals the truth: The water is swarming with leeches.

The leeches can be treated as described under the "leech, swarm" heading in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome. In short, they inflict 1d10 points of damage to the character each round that he or she spends in the pit. A character who loses two-thirds of his or her hit point total to the leeches begins to get woozy from loss of blood. (Describe to the character how his or her vision is beginning to get blurry, the head to spin, and strength to ebb away.) A cruel DM might force such a character to begin making Constitution checks or saving throws vs. death magic to remain conscious. Depending on the reaction of the player upon learning that his or her character is studded with leeches like a hedgehog with quills, the Dungeon Master may want to impose a fear or even a horror check. After all, leeches are pretty revolting creatures.

Unfortunately for the character, climbing out of the leech pit without help is extremely difficult. The walls are nothing more than slick mud, so it is impossible to get a good hand- or foothold. Exactly how long it takes to rescue the person in the pit is up to the Dungeon Master.

Leeches continue to cling to the character and feed upon the hero even after he or she has been rescued. As they are removed or finish feeding, the damage that the character suffers is reduced by one die type per round. Thus, on the round after being rescued, the character suffers 1d8 points, on the next he sustains only 1d6, and on the third round after being rescued only 1d4. After the fourth round, the filthy creatures inflict no further damage.

Sneak Attack

Even after the characters have suffered from their devious traps, the goblins do not rush headlong into the fray. By now, they have been watching the heroes from a distance for some time and are well aware that such an attack would cost many goblin

lives. As such, they stage a sortie to test the strength of the party.

This preliminary attack begins with a salvo of missile fire directed at the party from the treetops, the underbrush, and behind rocks. Before they launch this ambush, however, the goblins set a bit of a trap. When the Dungeon Master is ready to begin the goblin attack, read aloud the following text to the players:

As you move through the woods, you see a dim glow filtering through the trees and brush ahead of you. The light is rich and warm, clearly coming from a campfire or similar blaze. You see no apparent sign of activity ahead of you, so it seems that you may have caught the unknown keepers of this fire unawares.

In truth, this campsite is nothing more than a decoy. The fire has been set to draw the attention of the party away from the woods around them. As they move in to investigate, the goblins launch their attack. As the heroes approach this fire, read aloud the following text:

The fire burns at the center of an uneven clearing no more than twenty-five feet across. There are no tents, bedrolls, provisions, or other signs of life. Indeed, it appears as if whoever built the fire was suddenly swept away by the darkness.

Shortly after this, whenever the Dungeon Master judges the time to be right, the goblins attack. There are three of the revolting little creatures for every one of the adventurers. When the attack begins, the Dungeon Master can read the following text:

Without warning, the air around you is suddenly alive with whistling arrows and hurtling darts. This volley of deadly missiles rains down from every direction. Try as you might, however, you catch only fleeting glimpses of your attackers.

As mentioned before, there are three goblins for every one of the heroes. The Dungeon Master should check for surprise normally, applying a –4 penalty to the party if they showed no sign of anticipating the ambush. If they were suspicious that something was afoot, this penalty can be reduced to –2.

Goblin (3 per hero): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1–1: hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short bow or short sword); SZ S (4′ tall); ML average (10); Int average (9); AL LE; XP 15 each.

After their first salvo, the goblins try to move out of the way and watch the weapons and tactics employed by the heroes. They do not follow up this skirmish with a direct attack but nonetheless defend themselves if cornered.

Goblin Attack!

When the goblins finish evaluating their enemies, they attack in force. Before doing so, however, they take steps to counter any unusual weapons and tactics that they have seen employed by the heroes in the previous encounters.

For example, if the goblins witnessed the use of a *wand of fireballs*, they may attack wearing water-soaked furs. As a rule, their precautions result in only a +1 or +2 bonus to saving throws. Still, the fact that these creatures have taken steps to counter the heroes' attacks should be made clear to the players; if nothing else, this fact ought to unnerve them somewhat.

If the heroes have used some weapon that the goblins may be able to counter more effectively, the Dungeon Master should certainly allow them to do so. For example, if they noticed someone carrying many flasks of Greek fire (or a similar substance), the goblins might target that person with flaming arrows in an effort to explode the flasks before they can be used in battle.

When the Dungeon Master is ready to begin the goblin attack, he can read the following text aloud:

Suddenly, a host of terrible creatures surges out of the underbrush. No taller than children, they have leathery, green skin and black eyes that glint in the light of the moon. Flashing wickedly-curved scimitars above them, they set upon you like ravenous jackals at a fallen animal.

While the goblins appear to be making a simple frontal assault, their plan contains a bit more subtlety. In truth, these goblins are backed up by a dozen archers hiding in the trees. These individuals target anyone who appears to be casting a spell, readying a magical item, or otherwise taking an unusual action.

The battle against the goblins may go well at first. After all, the heroes are experienced adventurers, and goblins are not particularly dangerous foes. However, the Dungeon Master should continue to throw more goblin adversaries at the characters each round. Before long, their great numbers should begin to weigh upon even the mightiest of heroes.

At the start of the battle, there should be three goblins for each hero, evenly distributed in a semicircle in front of the party. At the end of each round of combat, more goblins spring from the brush into the skirmish, always arriving to reinforce the weakest point in the formation. The number of goblins confronting the heroes should increase every round, despite any losses in the combat.

The goblins are defending their territory. Thus, they allow the heroes to flee only if they retreat in the direction from which they came. The battle continues until the heroes either flee, surrender, or are defeated.

Fleeing

If the characters flee south, the adventure continues as they cross the East Timori Road and enter the Wytchwood. The goblins pursue the characters to the Timori road but do not pass beyond it. They have tangled with the White Lady who lives in the Wytchwood before and know better than to get in her way again. Should the heroes make good such an escape, the adventure continues with "Scene Five: Wytchwood."

If the heroes flee east on East Timori Road, the goblins pursue them only to the road itself. No fools, they do not want to tangle with Blackroot either. At this point, the adventure continues with "Scene Four: Brujamonte."

Defeat and Capture

If the heroes decide to fight to the end or surrender to the goblins, their fate may well appear to be sealed. Normally, of course, the goblins kill and devour their prisoners. These are not normal times, however, and being taken by the goblins actually furthers the investigation of the incident at Briggdarrow.

If the heroes are taken, the adventure continues with the next section, "Prisoners of the Goblins."

Prisoners of the Goblins

If the goblins capture the heroes, they bind them tightly, blindfold them, and manacle them together with heavy iron chains. The goblins confiscate any money, gems, and jewelry for themselves, as well any items the DM would like to relieve the party of, but they don't care about armor or most other "human-scum" equipment, including most magical items and weapons too large for them to effectively use (as they don't necessarily realize what they're looking at). When they turn the prisoners over to the shadow elves, they will also turn over most of the PCs' equipment.

After any injured characters receive rudimentary first aid (enough to keep them from dying), the entire party is led on a nightmarish march through the forest. This may well be the most unpleasant trip that the party has ever made, and the Dungeon Master should do everything in his or her power to make it clear how miserable the heroes actually are.

The following text describes the heroes' journey through the forest:

Tired and wounded, you are dragged along by the goblins. Forced along by sharp jabs with scimitars and heavy blows to your legs, you stumble blindly over roots, rocks, and the uneven terrain. Branches claw at your face as your manacles gnaw the flesh from your tortured ankles.

Just as it seems that this trip is going to continue forever, it comes to a sudden end. Without warning, you find that there is no ground beneath your feet. For a split second you experience the terror of an unexpected fall and then crash hard onto the ground.

Overhead, the sound of an iron grate crashing shut can be heard, followed by the scraping of a key in an ancient lock and a chorus of triumphant laughter.

In the Pit

The fall into the pit inflicts 1d4–1 points of damage to each of the characters. If someone was badly hurt during the battle with the goblins, this may be a serious wound. The goblins, however, take no notice of their captives now that they have been securely locked up.

With a little effort, the heroes can free themselves from their bonds and slip off their blindfolds in only 1d4+2 rounds. It is not possible

for anyone but a rogue to get out of the manacles without magic or the services of good lock pick, however.

While shackled together, the characters all move at half the movement rate of the slowest character. In addition, any attack roll, saving throw, or proficiency check made by a shackled character may, if appropriate, suffer a –4 penalty.

Food and Water

After the heroes have been in the pit for an hour or so, the goblins lower a bucket containing some food and water. This is by no means fine fare, consisting of somewhat bitter-tasting water and overripe fruit.

In truth, the food and water are drugged. The goblins realize that the adventurers could be very formidable enemies if allowed to escape, so they have decided to even the odds a bit. While the flavor of the fruit masks the taste of these chemicals, they are the cause of the bitterness in the water.

Anyone who drinks or eats the rations provided by the goblins must make a saving throw vs. poison. In the interest of the adventure, the Dungeon Master should probably make these rolls so that the players are not aware that something is amiss. If the saving throw is successful, the character becomes a bit woozy, imposing a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, proficiency checks, and similar die rolls. Should the character fail the saving throw, the effect is somewhat worse. The character becomes seriously disoriented, suffering a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, proficiency checks, and such die rolls.

These toxins are not especially potent, and their effects dissipate quickly. The penalty drops by one point for every two hours that passes. These poisons can be easily detected by means of magical spells and the special abilities of certain character classes.

The Adventure Continues

Exactly where the adventure goes from here depends upon the actions of the players and the desires of the Dungeon Master. It is very likely that the player characters attempt to escape from the pit and their goblin captors. However, some characters may choose to just wait and see what happens next.

Escape Attempts: The success of any attempt to escape from the pit is left to the imaginations of the Dungeon Master and his or her players. If they attempt a bland, uninspired escape, there is no reason for it to work. The Dungeon Master should not feel obligated to allow anything but an original and inventive escape to succeed.

Depending on the actions taken by the heroes, they may encounter lots of armed guards or slip unnoticed to the edges of goblin town. In either case, once they get past the outer defenses of the village, an alarm sounds, and an all-out pursuit is launched.

The purpose of this chase, at least as far as the story line is concerned, is to drive the heroes south. The Dungeon Master should use traps, goblin attacks, and chance encounters to force the heroes south across the East Timori Road and into the Wytchwood. Once in this region, the adventure can continue as described in "Scene Five."

Waiting It Out: If the player characters fail in their escape attempt or do not make one, they are left to languish in the pit for eight hours. At the end of that time, the events described in "Gift of the Goblins" comes to pass.

Gift of the Goblins

After the heroes have spent eight miserable hours in the pit, the goblin chief, Korag, comes to examine his prisoners. He has plans for them and feels that capturing these adventurers will do wonders for himself and his people.

Korag's Problem

Several nights ago, Korag was contacted by a trio of powrie, who evidently evaded all of the defenses set up by the goblin king. If they wanted him dead, Korag realized, he would not stand a chance. Knowing that to be the case, Korag decided to do as his mysterious visitors asked.

The powrie explained that they were searching for someone. From their descriptions, Korag came to believe that the woman, whom they called Maeve, is none other than the White Lady who lives in the Wytchwood. In exchange for this information, Korag believes that he has made a pact with the powrie. They agreed not to kill him or molest his people, and he agreed not to bother them south of the East Timori Road.

One of the aspects of his agreement, however, calls for Korag to turn over to the powrie any prisoners he takes. The powrie force these prisoners to give up any information that they might have about the White Lady. In exchange for his efforts, Korag receives gold and other such treasures.

Thus, it is Korag's plan to turn the heroes over to these powrie. With that in mind, the following narrative describes Korag's visit to the heroes in their pit. Korag speaks with a hissing voice—slow, serpentine, and sinister.

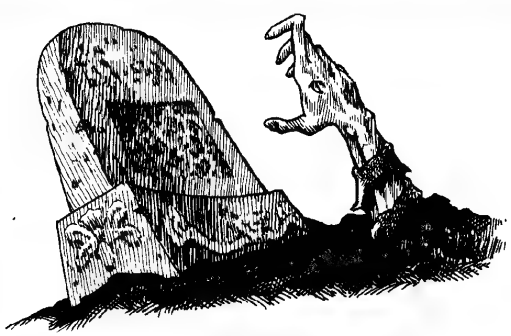
After what seems like an eternity in the darkness of the pit, the sky begins to lighten. In short order, a number of your revolting captors appear. With salivating smiles that show wickedly curving teeth, they raise their bows and take careful aim at you. Sunlight glints on the obsidian tips of their arrows.

Just when it appears that the archers are about to fire, another creature appears. Taller than the others by at least a foot, it leers down at you with features at once disgusted and disgusting. Hissing like a snake, the beast speaks to you.

"I am Korag, High Massster of the Goblinwood. Who you are and why you are here isss of no interessst to me. All that mattersss isss that you are intrudersss and that you are going to die. After much thought, your fate hasss been resssolved. Yoursss will be a mossst prolonged and painful death. Enjoy it. We will."

With that, a number of goblins move forward and drop clay pots down into the pit. These pots shatter on impact, and a thick white smoke begins to fill the air. This vapor is sickeningly sweet and quickly fills the bottom of the pit. The following text describes this bombardment:

As each pot shatters on the walls or floor of the pit, it splashes out a putrid yellow liquid. On contact with the air, this noxious slime begins to bubble and quickly boils away into a thick, oily vapor. As more and more of the containers shatter around you, the miasma in the pit becomes so thick that it is impossible to see. Even the slightest whiff of this sickly sweet cloud makes your head spin and your vision blur.



This cloud is a potent sedative which requires every character in the pit to make a successful saving throw vs. poison or fall unconscious. The effects of this vapor increase as more and more of it is inhaled, so a new saving throw is required for each round spent in the pit. Eventually, all of the characters should succumb to the noxious cloud.

If one or more of the characters is immune to poisons or otherwise manages to escape the effects of the gas, the goblins resort to other tactics. This might include stones, arrows dipped in a paralytic agent, or other means of inducing unconsciousness.

After all of the characters have been subdued (or at least appear subdued), the goblins open the pit and recover their prisoners. They double-check the shackles, replace blindfolds, and otherwise make certain that there are no surprises. Once that is done, they lift the prisoners out of the pit with ropes and take them to the powrie.

Prisoners of the Powrie

In all likelihood, the characters are unaware of the events that transpire after they are gassed in the Goblinwood. In the event that one or more of them remains awake to witness the meeting with the powrie, the Dungeon Master can summarize the following events for them.

After being removed from the pit, the prisoners are carried away and thrown in the back of a wagon that is little more than an iron cage on wheels, like a lion cage in a traveling circus. With twelve strong goblins drawing the wagon, the characters are carried off to the south. Korag, who is far too important to pull the wagon himself, rides upon it as if he were driving a team of beasts.

In time, they come to the East Timori Road, which marks the dividing line between the Wytchwood in the south and the Goblinwood in the north. Here, the goblins come to a halt, and Korag recovers a bone horn from a compartment beneath his seat. He blows it once, and it issues forth a long, mournful wailing. Anyone who has heard the deadly moaning of a banshee recognizes this sound as similar, if less fatal: the lamentations of a tortured spirit.

In time, a trio of two men and one woman arrive. These are powriekin who have been sent by their masters to meet with the goblins. They bear with them a large sack of valuable items (most of which have been taken from Briggdarrow) which they turn over to the master of the goblins.

With his minions in greedy pursuit, Korag hisses a farewell to the powriekin and vanishes off to the north. The adventure can continue now with "Scene Eight: Prisoners of Darkness."

Scene Four: Brujamonte

This is the forest primeval.
The murmuring pines
and the hemlocks . . .
Stand like Druids of old.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Evangeline, l. 1

The forest west of the Blackmist River is known in Tepest as the Brujamonte. Unless they are following the East Timori Road, few travelers venture into this place, for the Brujamonte is ruled by the evil treant Blackroot.

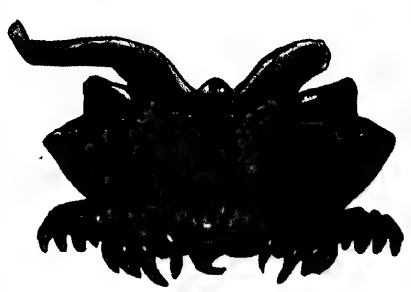
This scene occurs as soon as the heroes leave Briggdarrow and enter the Brujamonte (presumably that same night). Over the course of this scene, the characters are lured toward the ravenous Blackroot. Only if they act promptly and bravely do they have a chance to escape his great wooden maw.

Blackroot is described in detail in Appendix Four, at the end of this book. Blackroot's game statistics are presented at the end of this chapter, but familiarity with his history, personality, and motivations can help this scene run more smoothly.

Mood and Atmosphere

The Dungeon Master should bear in mind the corrupted nature of the Brujamonte and bring it into play whenever possible. This can be easily done by choosing evocative words in answer to player inquiries. To really build up the tension of this place, however, the Dungeon Master should make sure to keep the following things in mind while the player characters explore this dark forest.

Every description of the Brujamonte should be made with terms that accent the claustrophobic nature of the place. Trees, vines, and branches should always be characterized as "tangling," "clutching," "clawing," or otherwise seeking to impede the progress of the heroes. The Dungeon Master should also mention that the plants in this place are deformed and sinister looking.



While in this forest, the heroes should also encounter stinging insects and nasty creatures like poisonous spiders or deadly vipers. Every step that they take in the Brujamonte should bring them into further peril.

The Dungeon Master should always strive to give the players the impression that someone or something is watching them as they move through these woods. They will, of course, suspect goblins or other dangerous creatures. In truth, every animal in the forest is tracking their progress for Blackroot. The heroes need not know this, but the belief that eyes are always on them should help quicken their pulses as they travel.

Travels in the Dark Wood

Anyone who enters the forests of southern Tepest instantly becomes aware of that place's evil nature. The trees produce bitter fruit, the streams are brackish, stinging insects swarm everywhere, and thorny undergrowth hinders progress in every direction. Read the following narrative to the players to get this phase of the adventure started:

As you travel east, the woods gradually become dark and sinister. Gnarled, dead trees seem to outnumber those that cling to life. Stinging insects become at first a nuisance then a plague, and the air becomes bitter. There can be no doubt that the forest has been corrupted by a great evil. The only mystery is the identity of the malevolent being who rules this place.

Deadly Innocence

The evil of Blackroot is so intense that it has turned the normally docile animals of the Brujamonte into menacing beasts. The natural creatures of this place, from squirrels and chipmunks to wolves and foxes, are no longer of neutral alignment; instead, they are neutral evil. This, combined with the fact that they generally obey Blackroot, makes any trek through these woods a dangerous and difficult journey.

Encounters with such animals can be especially effective if the party contains druids, rangers, or elves, for these folk are the most likely to be upset by the aberrations brought on by Blackroot.

The best way to stage these encounters is to have the characters come upon what appears to be a normal enough scene, perhaps a couple of deer drinking at a stream. The Dungeon Master can use the following text to describe such a scene.

With some effort, you force your way through this increasingly difficult terrain. With every step, the branches of the trees seem to reach out and claw at you, scraping your skin and catching in your clothes. Whenever you try to turn back or retrace your steps, the branches seem to have closed impassibly behind you.

Just when it seems that it is impossible to continue, however, things take a turn for the better. The heavy air of the forest seems to lessen, and the sound of a trickling stream graces your senses. Ahead, visible in a shaft of moonlight, you see a doe and two fawns drinking from a sweet-looking stream.

These animals actually serve as bait, however, for a pack of wolves that lay in wait nearby. If the heroes stop to admire the deer, ready a bow for hunting, or otherwise focus their attention on the seemingly timid creatures, the wolves attack. When that happens, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud:

Suddenly, the entire mood of the forest changes. The trees seem to close in around you, and the sky is choked off by looming gnarled branches. The howling of wolves punctuates the thick air, and a dozen slavering beasts burst from the undergrowth. The deer are gone, vanishing into the forest even as the wolves appeared.

Wolves (12): AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 16 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SD +1 vs. *charm*; SZ S (4′ long); ML special; Int low (6); AL NE; XP 120 each.

Notes: *Morale*—Because these wolves are controlled by Blackroot, they fight to the death, never having to make morale checks.

Twisting Trails

As the heroes move through the Brujamonte, they discover occasional trails and paths. Some of these look like nothing more than game trails, while others are more worn and hint at regular use by travelers. No matter which ones they take, however, their path turns and twists closer to the center of the forest and the waiting maw of Blackroot.

The following text can be used to describe their travels along these turning, twisting paths.

Every step through this dark forest is a challenge, requiring you to deal with clawing shrubs, uneven ground, and swarms of stinging insects. Here and there, short clearings and game trails offer you a few hundred feet of easier travel before they are choked out of existence by vines and undergrowth.

Should the characters attempt to use magic to find their way, they fare somewhat better. A *find the path* or similar spell enables them to avoid a quick encounter with the master of this wood. However, Blackroot sends packs of wolves or evil treants out to attack the party and drive them toward him if he suspects that they may slip from his grasp.

The Dead Goblin Society

If the Dungeon Master has spent some time building up the evil nature of this place and hinting that the party is being watched, the heroes are likely to suspect the presence of goblins, especially if they've already experienced the Goblinwood. In this encounter, they actually meet some goblins. Unfortunately, it is not exactly the encounter they might have expected.

The meeting with the goblins can begin with the Dungeon Master reading the following text aloud to the players:

As you press deeper into these dark woods, the smell of a campfire drifts through the air. The pleasant aroma of roasting meat is almost seductive as it cuts through the thick miasma around you.

Certainly, the heroes want to know a little bit more about the fire-keepers and their nature. Whether they investigate by magical means, through scouting, or simply by walking toward the fire, their next impression is as follows.

At the center of a small clearing burns a crudely-fashioned campfire. Stoked with green wood, dry leaves, and a bundle of

twigs, it burns unevenly. Hissing and snapping like an angry spirit, the blaze throws out serpentine coils of gray smoke.

Scattered about the clearing are the bodies of a dozen small, humanoid creatures. They are twisted and deformed, with faces that remind you of savage, wild boars. These pitiful creatures lie bent and broken, some with limbs hanging in the churning fire. Open wounds that still ooze life into the black soil make it clear that these monstrosities died not long ago. Your gorge rises as you realize that the smell you thought was roasting meat is actually cooked goblin from where one fell forward into the flames.

In actuality, the goblins were killed by a trio of evil treants. While such creatures are normally allowed to travel in the Brujamonte unmolested, these goblins dared to cut living branches from the forest to build their fire. In so doing, they angered the evil treants who nurture the evil of this place under the guidance of Blackroot.

To the treants, the heroes do not look all that different from the goblins. As such, they attack the adventurers shortly after spotting them. When that happens, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud:

Suddenly, the sky above you explodes in a frenzy of frightened birds. Squawking and shrieking, they beat their wings in a frantic effort to escape an enemy you cannot see. In the wake of their disappearance, all is quiet for a second. Then, you spot movement in the forest around you.

Six of the gnarled, sinister-looking trees begin to move. They lean forward, reaching their twisted branches menacingly toward you. Sudden tremors shoot through the ground as they heave their thick roots from the earth.

In truth, the attacking creatures are not the treants who killed the goblins. Rather, they are normal trees animated by those evil beings. The treants themselves attempt to avoid discovery and attack through these minions until the heroes are on the verge of death. Only then do the true masters of this grove move forward for the kill.

Because there are an effectively infinite number of trees in these evil woods, the heroes cannot triumph by brute force. In order to survive this encounter, they have to either discover which three trees are actually treants or flee from the battle.

If they opt to flee, the Dungeon Master should base their chances of escape on their speed and any actions that they might take to cover their tracks. If it becomes clear to the treants that the characters are likely to escape, they attempt to herd them toward the grove where Blackroot waits for them.

Discovering which trees are actually treants is a difficult prospect. Any manner of nonmagical examination has only a 10% chance of successfully rooting out the party's true enemy. For the purposes of this encounter, one round of searching gives a character a chance to spot one of the three treants. Druids, rangers, and similar characters who are more familiar with the ways of natural things have a 50% chance per round of searching to spot one of the treants.

Evil Treant (3): AC 0; MV 12; HD 10; hp 60 each; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6/3d6 (branches); SA animate trees; SW fire; SZ H (16′ tall); ML elite (14); Int very (12); AL CE; XP 12,000 each.

Notes: *Animate Trees*—Each treant can animate two normal trees to join it in attacking the heroes. *Fire*—Attacks using fire are made with a +4 bonus. Should the attack hit, it inflicts an extra point of damage per die. All saves made by the treat to resist fire-based attacks suffer a –4 penalty.

Personality: Hateful and murderous.

Animated Tree (6): AC 0; MV 12; HD 10; hp 45 each; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6/3d6 (branches); SD never surprised; SW fire; SZ H (16′ tall); ML special; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 10,000 each.

Notes: *Fire*—Any fire-based attacks against these trees have a +4 attack bonus and a +1 damage bonus. In addition, the trees save against all fire-based attacks with a –4 penalty. *Morale*—Because these trees are controlled by the evil treants, they continue to attack as long those evil beings are alive, never having to make morale checks.

Encountering Blackroot

Blackroot rules the Brujamonte through the plants and animals of the forest. He keeps a careful eye on all that transpires in that vile place. In this adventure, he desires nothing more than to kill and eat the characters.

After the Dungeon Master has presented one or more of the earlier encounters, the twisting trails of the Brujamonte eventually lead the party into the Blood Grove, lair of the dreaded Blackroot. This encounter begins when the master of the evil

treants calls on his minions to close ranks and form a tight circle around the party. The following description can be read when this happens:

As you force your way deeper into the forest, you come suddenly upon a broad clearing fully one hundred feet across. A cloudless sky spreads out above it with a dazzling array of stars throwing a cold, pale light upon the place. Knee-high grass fills this clearing, swaying softly back and forth like gentle waves on a secluded pond.

At the center of this clearing, a great oak looms up from the earth. The tree's curling branches and grooved bark make it look like a thing nurtured by dark magic and malevolent soil.

At this point, the Dungeon Master should have the players roll fear checks. If the heroes do not try to flee, they may attempt to take some action involving the tree. In the latter case, they may try talking with it, attacking it, or ensnaring it with a magical spell.

Fleeing the Blood Grove

If the heroes attempt to flee, they discover that the woods behind them no longer offer much chance of an escape. The following narrative should set this scene for the players:

With a sickening sense of vulnerability, you notice that a terrible change has come over the forest. All around the clearing, the trees have moved together in a great press of twisted limbs and gnarled bark.

In the almost nonexistent spaces between the trunks of these malevolent oaks, sinister eyes burn in the darkness. All manner of creatures seem to have joined together to surround you, for the eyes come in a variety of sizes and colors. Despite their differences, they all share a sinister, predatory gleam.

Anyone who attempts to break through the cordon drawn up by the plants and animals of the Brujamonte and flee back into the woods fails. A merciful Dungeon Master might give those foolish enough to try this a chance to reconsider or even the option to fall back after they discover the scope of the enemy. Otherwise, any character who fights

his or her way out of Blackroot's clearing disappears beneath the trees and is never seen again. (At the DM's option, a long, horrible scream, suddenly cut off, can issue from the forest a minute or two later.) The only escape to be found in the Brujamonte this night is the ultimate one.

Speaking With Blackroot

Should the heroes attempt to speak with Blackroot, they find him uninterested in negotiation. He is no more interested in parleying with them than a man would be in striking a bargain with his dinner.

Still, Blackroot humors them for a few minutes. When the Dungeon Master gives voice to the evil treant's words, he should use as deep and booming a voice as possible. Further, Blackroot never speaks quickly, for those of his kind are deliberate and methodical in their thinking.

The following text gives the first words spoken by the master of the Brujamonte to the trespassers in this realm:

As you look at the great oak, its bark begins to shift until a powerful, malevolent face becomes visible. Cruel, yellow eyes focus on you, and a vast maw full of jagged teeth opens. A deep, rumbly voice issues forth:

"You have come into a place of darkness and evil beyond your understanding. I am Blackroot, master of the Blood Grove and ruler over the plants and animals of the Brujamonte. You are not welcome here. Grovel before my majesty, and I will make your deaths relatively painless."

The preceding text should serve to set the tone for any conversation with Blackroot. He cannot conceive of any way in which the heroes might escape from here or defeat him. Thus, after a few minutes of utterly worthless conversation, he moves to destroy them. These events are described in the section entitled "Attacking Blackroot."

Attacking Blackroot

Blackroot does not stand idly by and allow himself to be attacked. At the first sign of aggression or spellcasting on the part of the heroes, he defends himself. It is unlikely that the heroes have any idea what they are getting themselves into at this point, but the following text may give them some idea of the dangers they face.

Blackroot is detailed in the *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendices I & II* and in Appendix Four of this book. The Dungeon Master should carefully read his entry before running this encounter.

Blackroot (Evil Treant): AC 0; MV 12; HD 12; hp 84; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 4d6/4d6 (branches); SA spells, animate trees; SD spells; SW fire; SZ H (18′ tall); ML elite (14); Int very (11); AL CE; XP 14,000.

Notes: *Spells*—Blackroot casts the listed spells as a 12th-level druid. He does not need or use material components. *Animate Trees*—Blackroot can control up to two trees (as described below) at a time, each of which takes one round to uproot. *Fire*—Any weapon or spell that employs fire gains a +4 bonus on the attack and inflicts 1 extra point of damage per die. Also, Blackroot suffers a –4 penalty to all saving throws against fire-based attacks.

Personality: Malevolent and egotistical.

Spells: 1st—*animal friendship, entangle, locate animals or plants, putrefy food or drink;* 2nd—*charm person or mammal, create water, speak with animals, warp wood;* 3rd—*hold animal, plant growth, snare, spike growth, summon insects;* 4th—*animal summoning I, call woodland beings, hold plant, repel insects, speak with plants;* 5th—*animal growth, animal summoning II, antiplant shell, wall of thorns;* 6th—*antianimal shell, speak with monsters.*

Animated Tree (2): AC 0; MV 12; HD 10; hp 45 each; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6/3d6 (branches); SD never surprised; SW fire; SZ H (16′ tall); ML special; Int very (12); AL CE; XP 10,000 each.

Notes: *Fire*—Any fire-based attacks against these trees have a +4 attack bonus and a +1 damage bonus. In addition, the trees save against all fire-based attacks with a –4 penalty. *Morale*—Because these trees are controlled by Blackroot, they continue to attack as long he is alive, never having to make morale checks.

As soon as the heroes take any offensive action toward Blackroot, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud, adjusting as necessary:

In an instant, the stillness of the night is filled with a cacophony of howls and shrieks from the animals of this twisted forest. Deep booming sounds, the hammering of wood on wood, roll like thunder across the clearing. As all these noises drum your senses, the great and evil oak tree begins to move toward you with unexpected speed.

Blackroot's first action is to use his magical abilities on the party. If they are clearly going to be using wooden weapons, like bows or spears, against him, he uses his *warp wood* spell to destroy them. Otherwise, he casts an *entangle* or *spike growth* spell on the grasses that fill the clearing.

In the rounds that follow, Blackroot makes liberal use of his magic, favoring his *wall of thorns* and *plant growth* spells to hinder the party's movement. If a particular character stands out as a leader, he uses his *charm person* ability to bend that individual to his will.

After the heroes have been battered around enough to be all but helpless, Blackroot moves in for the kill. Read aloud the rather unpleasant scene described below:

As you lie battered and on the verge of death, the great oak looms above you. In the twisted patterns on its bark, you can see a sinister face of unspeakable evil. As a booming chuckle fills the air, convoluted branches reach down and scoop up your body. For a second, the creature's malevolent yellow eyes examine your fragile form.

Then, a great maw opens in the trunk. Your last attempts to resist the strength of this ancient creature come to naught as you slide past rows of jagged teeth and into an agonizing darkness from which no man has ever returned.

Once the heroes begin to battle Blackroot, they have no option but to destroy him. Anything less results in their deaths. Blackroot desires no information, treasure, or other compensation. He hungers only for the flesh of these intruders.

If the heroes defeat Blackroot, the shock of his death ripples through the whole of the forest. If the heroes act quickly, this is their opportunity to escape. If they delay for any reason, however, they are lost.

The following text describes the death of Blackroot and the resulting chaos:

With a final great crash and a cry rings in your ears, the mighty oak falls to the ground. Deprived of its evil life, the creature's ancient body shatters into rotten decayed shards.

As the thunderous impact echoes around the clearing, a momentary silence replaces the wild howling that has marked your battle. Then, chaos ensues, and a terrible, mournful wailing fills the night.

The even ranks of trees and beasts that ring the great clearing ripple and break up. Gaps form in what was once in an impregnable barrier.

If the heroes do not take advantage of this disruption in the evil of the forest, they are lost. In only a few minutes, the entire wrath of the forest and its creatures turns on the party. If they remain in the clearing when that happens, they are overwhelmed from all sides and swept out of existence.

Assuming that the heroes flee, they soon find themselves pursued by everything that is dark and terrible in the Brujamonte. Only by fleeing at their best speed can they hope to escape. Even at this pace, however, the heroes are attacked at least once or twice by treants, wolves, giant spiders, carnivorous plants, or whatever else the Dungeon Master feels like throwing at them.

Every attack should serve to drive the party west, back toward the Wytchwood.

Leaving the Brujamonte

If the heroes flee before encountering Blackroot, they are almost certainly forced to move west into the Wytchwood. Efforts to press on to the east only bring them deeper into the Brujamonte and, eventually, into the clutches of the master of this evil forest. A path south brings them to the edges of the Shadow Rift, but any descent into that realm from this place ends only in oblivion. Thus, the adventure should continue from here with "Scene Five: Wytchwood."

It is remotely possible that the player characters might make their way north and attempt to cross Lake Kronov (if they did not come from there originally). Should this happen, the adventure continues with "Scene Two: Lake Kronov."

Scene Five: Wytchwood

More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchang'd
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude.

—John Milton
Paradise Lost

Sandwiched neatly between the Blackmist River and the roiling vapors of the Shadow Rift, the Wytchwood has long been avoided by the people of Tepest. Like the Goblinwood to the north and the Brujamonte to the east, it is a place rumored to be full of strange and terrible creatures. Furthermore, the rumors are true.

This scene depicts an effort by the characters to explore these strange and frightening woods. A number of routes bring the heroes into this scene. They most likely come into the Wytchwood with Kian after exploring Briggdarrow. If this is the case, they are searching for Kian's sister and perhaps even hoping to encounter the mysterious White Lady. It is also possible that the heroes come into this region after fleeing from the goblins of the north or the evil treants to the east. Should this happen, they may or may not have Kian with them.

However the heroes manage to find their way into the Wytchwood, this scene should occur the same night as the previous encounters. When they enter the area, they soon cross paths with a group of powrie searching the area for the White Lady.

Powrie

In order to complete his plan, Loht must get his hands on the missing *Crown of Arak*. Currently, however, he has no idea where this powerful item is located, although he knows it was Maeve who hid it from him. The only obvious course of action for Loht is to find his sister and force her to tell him where the crown is hidden. In order to do this, Loht has sent a party of powrie and powriekin into the Wytchwood to spy upon Maeve.

Something Strangely Familiar

If the heroes learned of the muryan from Kian or encountered any of them in Briggdarrow, it is apparent when they encounter the powrie and powriekin that these are not the same creatures that attacked the village. So different are they in appearance, in fact, the player characters are unlikely to realize that both are Arak.

If the party reaches this scene without having encountered the muryan or learning anything about the so-called "dancing men," they may well conclude that it was the powrie who attacked Briggdarrow. This assumption is not likely to have any affect on the flow of the adventure and need not be countered by the Dungeon Master. When the heroes meet Maeve in later scenes, she can set them straight.

Getting Started

In order to be ready for this scene, the Dungeon Master should review the entries detailing the powrie and powriekin in Appendix Four at the end of this book (on pages 147 and 151, respectively). While a summarized version of these statistics appear later in this scene, the Dungeon Master may be forced to fall back to the full description if the players attempt something unusual.

Ambush

This scene begins with an attack on the party by the powrie scouts. In order to get things rolling, the Dungeon Master should read the following text aloud to the players.

As you move through the forest, you cannot help but notice that it seems to be tightening its embrace upon you. The boughs of towering trees block out the star-specked sky, and gnarled roots jut out of the soil to make your footing treacherous. The air, which is thick with the smell of pine and loam, is still and heavy. Even the scratching of crickets and the buzzing of flies seems muted by the sweet miasma of the forest.

Then, without warning, the stillness of this moment is shattered by a hail of stinging darts. Where they strike your flesh, an unpleasant burning sensation spreads out quickly from the wound.

Resolution

The powrie use a layered attack to combat the heroes. Their primary goal is to capture the adventurers without risking their own lives. The lives of their changelings, however, they sacrifice more readily.

Opening Shots

The powrie first strike with a volley of missile fire. In the same manner that a human might launch a javelin, the powrie hurl slender darts that are about three inches long. These darts are treated with a type-O poison (injected/2d12 minutes/paralytic), requiring victims to make successful saving throws vs. paralyzation or be unable to move. Fortunately, the onset time of this drug is slow, making it possible for the characters to resist its effects long enough to seek medical attention or drive off the powrie.

The Second Wave

In the wake of this initial attack, the powrie loose their changelings on the party. They themselves remain back, keeping out of harm's way as much as possible. At the end of each round of combat, the powrie launch another volley at the party. Each character struck by their darts must attempt another saving throw to resist the effects of these tainted missiles.

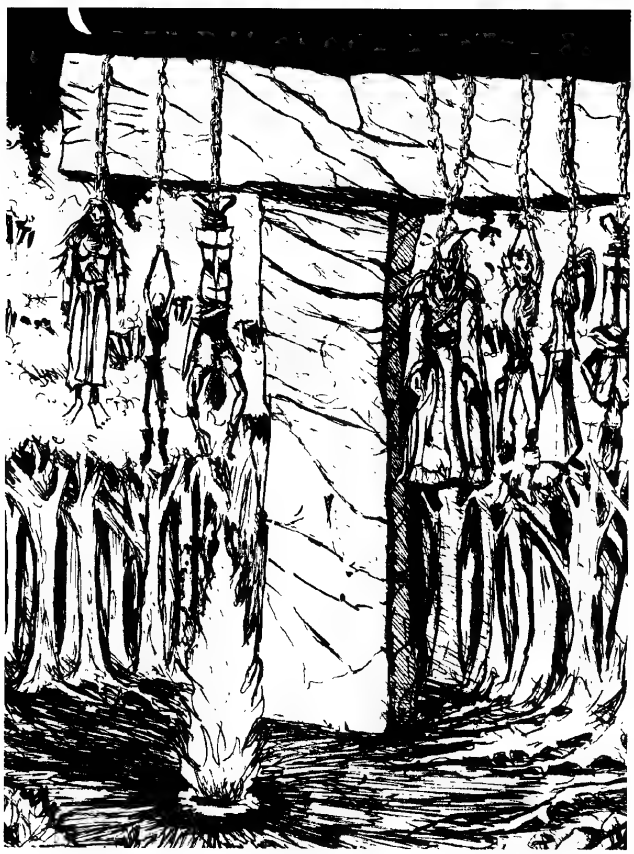
The powriekin attack by dropping down from the trees above. If the heroes have taken some special care to prevent this tactic, then normal surprise rules apply. If no such safeguards have been put in place, then the heroes suffer –2 penalties on their surprise checks. In either case, the changelings cannot be surprised in this encounter.

Resolving the Battle

After the arrival of the powriekin, the battle continues until one side or the other is vanquished. The powrie remain in the shelter of the trees and forest, firing missiles and using their magic to help the changelings in any way they can. From time to time, a powrie might pop into view long enough to flash its fear-inducing smile at a hero or shriek to deafen nearby characters. If a single character is isolated from his or her fellows or unusually vulnerable, a powrie might bite that hero in hopes of driving him or her blind.

For the most part, however, the powrie leave the battle in the hands of their changelings. Of course, they are well aware that only magical weapons can harm them and thus may be willing to take a few chances if the battle appears to be a close one.

If the heroes determine that the driving forces behind this attack are the fairylike powrie, they may opt to direct their attacks in that direction. Should this happen, it is possible for the heroes to drive off the powrie. Even if they flee, however, these evil Arak leave their changelings to fight to the death. The powriekin have no purpose in life



other than to serve their masters, so they unquestioningly follow these instructions.

If the heroes defeat the powrie but are then overcome by the changelings (or fall victim to the paralytic agents that these Arak employ), their original attackers (or another party of powrie scouts) return to claim them.

Drama and Fear

In order to maximize the drama of this attack, the Dungeon Master should do several things. While any one of these techniques enhances the scene, taken as a group they make the party's battle with the powrie frightening and memorable.

The Powrie: First, the Dungeon Master should make every effort to keep the nature of the powrie a secret. The heroes might catch glimpses of "something the size of a bat" flitting about in the darkness of the forest long before they actually see one of the powrie. After all, a one-foot-tall creature that looks a great deal like a pixie is not going to be especially frightening to the average hero.

In addition to hiding for some (or all) of the encounter, the powrie make the most of their maneuverability, the cover of the forest, their hiding in shadows ability, and their illusion spells. They can dodge and swoop among the branches far more quickly than even a halfling or kender can follow. Capturing a powrie, or even getting a clear shot at one, might be next to impossible.

The menace of the powrie is further enhanced if they resort to backstabbing their enemies. If they do this, they again employ their powerful (type-O) poison. When the tiny creature leaps out and stabs a henchman or friendly nonplayer character with a needlelike dagger quicker than the heroes can follow, the characters will take the little assassins more seriously.

The Forest: Dungeon Masters should make great use of the claustrophobic nature of the dense forest. The thickness of the air can make breathing difficult during combat (even though this has no game effect), twisting roots might cause heroes to trip or fall, and weapons can become fouled in shrubs and vines.

In practice, the effects of the forest can be brought into play without any effort on the part of the Dungeon Master. Whenever an attack roll or saving throw fails, the Dungeon Master can simply blame it on the environs: "Your attack missed because the blade of your sword was deflected by an overhanging branch."

Magic: Dungeon Masters should remember that the powrie are 45% magic resistant and utterly immune to spells that involve lightning or electricity. This should be made apparent to the heroes as soon as the opportunity presents itself. The first spell that the heroes use against the powrie, from a *wish* to a *magic missile*, should be thwarted by these Arak's resistance. The Dungeon Master should roll some dice, but just for show. The players should guess that it failed because of an innate ability of the target. A little magic resistance goes a long way toward terrifying a group of heroes.

On the other side of the coin, do not forget that the powrie are able to use illusions. Being attacked by vicious little creatures that can become invisible and multiply will definitely frighten most heroes.

Statistics

Complete entries for the powrie and powriekin can be found in Appendix Four at the end of this book.

Changeling, Powriekin (10): AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA backstab (+4 attack, 3× damage); SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, move silently (75%), hide in shadows (75%); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CE; XP 270 each.

Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Special Equipment: Daggers and darts (coated in type-O poison).

Arak, Powrie (6): AC 2; MV 9, fly 15 (A); HD 5; hp 15 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1 point (dagger) or 1d4 (bite); SA spells, fear, backstab, shriek; SD +3 or better weapon to hit, immune to steel, electricity, and lightning; SW platinum, sunlight; MR 45%; SZ T (1´ tall); ML fanatic (18); Int high (14); AL CE; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Bite*—The venomous bite of a powrie inflicts 1d4 points of damage and forces the foe to save vs. poison to avoid being *blinded* (as per the spell). *Spells*—Powrie can cast the spells listed below as 5th-level mages. *Fear*—At will, powrie can show a menacing grin that acts as a *fear* spell. *Backstab*—Triple damage. *Shriek*—Powrie can emit a high-pitched shriek, causing all opponents within 30 feet to save vs. spell to avoid deafness (per the spell).

Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Special Equipment: Daggers and darts (coated in type-O poison).

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*audible glamer, change self, phantasmal force, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern, invisibility*; 3rd—*spectral force.*

Aftermath

The performance of the heroes in this battle determines where the adventure goes from here. If they do well, the heroes can move on to an encounter with Maeve. If they fare poorly, they may fall captive to the vicious powrie.

Victory

If the heroes defeat the powrie and their changeling minions, the adventure continues with the next scene, in which they finally meet the White Lady.

The Dungeon Master should be sure to give the players a break between the two, however, so that they do not see the encounter with Maeve as being a part of the encounter with the powrie. This can be done simply by giving the heroes a chance to wander around the forest for a while before moving on to the next encounter.

The meeting with Maeve is detailed in "Scene Six: The Witch's Lair."

Defeat

If the powrie or powriekin defeat the heroes, even if only by means of their poisonous weapons, they take them captive.

Any of the heroes injured or knocked unconscious by the powrie or powriekin receive prompt medical attention. The Arak have an antidote for the poisons and have a knowledge of first aid. They do not want the heroes dead, at least not until after they question them about Maeve.

The unsettling events surrounding the heroes' imprisonment are detailed in "Scene Eight: Prisoners of Darkness."

Flight

Should the heroes manage to stave off the attacks of the powrie and powriekin long enough to flee, the Dungeon Master should give them quite a chase scene.

Of course, the Arak and their changeling minions do not just allow the heroes to escape. They take up the pursuit as soon as possible. Dungeon Masters should keep in mind that it might be possible to elude the human changelings, but escaping from the winged powrie is much harder.

The heroes' escape could be hampered by the paralytic poison of the powrie darts. Characters overcome by the poison soon (over the course of about a minute) find themselves utterly unable to move. Fleeing adventurers have to either abandon their fallen comrades, find some way to carry them along, or stand and defend them against pursuers.

If the heroes do manage to make good their escape, the adventure can continue when they come upon Maeve's barriers. This encounter is detailed in "Scene Six: The Witch's Lair."

Scene Six: The Witch's Lair

Virtue is like precious odours—most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed.

—Francis Bacon
Essays of Adversity

In this scene, the heroes come upon the magical wards that protect the cottage of the White Lady from intruders. After dealing with these barriers, they may enter and encounter the Princess of the Shee who dwells within.

Setting the Stage

In order to reach this scene, the heroes almost certainly faced the powrie and their changeling minions in the previous scene. Exactly how that scene ended, however, determines where this one begins.

If the heroes triumphed over or escaped from the powrie, they begin this scene with a series of strange encounters in the wilderness. Only after they bypass these wards do they finally come upon the cottage in which Maeve dwells. In this case, the scene begins with the encounter entitled "Wards and Watchers" below. The Dungeon Master should keep in mind that this is all happening very quickly; this encounter occurs the same night as the events in "Scene One: Briggdarrow."

It is also very possible that the heroes come into this scene after being captured and interrogated by the Arak. If they were captured by either the muryan raiders (back in the first scene) or the scouting powrie (in the previous scene), then this part of the adventure begins after the heroes have been rescued from their captors by Maeve. If this happens to be the case, the Dungeon Master can begin this scene with the heroes already in Maeve's cottage. Such an event is described in "Awakening" (see page 50).

If the adventure has gotten off track somehow, the Dungeon Master can introduce an encounter with Maeve to get it going again. In this case, the exact circumstances must be determined by the previous events. In all likelihood, however, one of the two previously mentioned encounters should be close enough to suffice with a few minor changes.

Wards and Watchers

This part of the scene begins when the characters spot a plume of smoke rising from Maeve's chimney and move closer to investigate. In making their way to the White Lady's home, they encounter a series of wards erected around her cottage. If the heroes hope to meet this mysterious woman, they must first bypass these obstacles. The following text describes the first sighting of the smoke plume:

As you pause briefly in your travels to catch your breath, a curious sight catches your attention. Not too far ahead, you notice a slender coil of gray smoke twining into the night sky. Visible as much because of the stars that it block out as for the moonlight that falls upon it, it looks very much like it is coming from a chimney of some kind.

Assuming that the heroes opt to continue toward the column of smoke, the adventure continues with the encounters below. Should they seek to avoid this beacon, they should encounter another group of powrie (as described in "Scene Five: Wytchwood").

If they move toward the smoke, the player characters encounter the various defenses that protect the White Lady from intruders. All told, three wards encircle Maeve's cottage. These were designed to keep out enemies and those who might irritate the Princess of the Shee.

Each of the following encounters should be presented in order to the heroes as they draw nearer to Maeve's cottage.

The Unseen Wall

This ward is the simplest and most effective of Maeve's barriers. It is nothing more than an invisible barrier of magical force. Getting past it is almost as easy as looking through it, provided that the adventurers use a little bit of imagination.

If the heroes have been following Arla's tracks, they notice goblin tracks all around the outer perimeter of the barrier. However, only Arla's tracks continue past the invisible wall. Anyone investigating Arla's footprints should make a tracking proficiency check (or an Intelligence check with a –6 penalty). On a successful check, the character realizes that Arla actually retreated through the wall, backing away from the advancing goblins.

Finding the Wall

The following description describes the events that affect the character in the front of the group. When the heroes reach the Unseen Wall, the Dungeon Master can read the following description aloud to the players:

As you move through the woods, you cannot help but notice that they have become less threatening and oppressive. For the first time since you entered this forest, you have no feeling of being watched, stalked, or chased.

Then, without warning, you crash hard into some sort of unseen barrier. Whatever its nature, magical energy or unseen construction, the barrier is solid enough to stop you dead in your tracks.

If the character was walking at a normal pace, he or she must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or be stunned for one round. While the impact does not inflict any damage, walking into an unexpected obstruction is always a shock.

If the character was running through the woods, however, the crash is a little more severe. Such a character suffers 1d4 points of damage and must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation. A successful save indicates that the character is stunned for a number of rounds equal to the number of points of damage he or she suffered. A failed save knocks the character unconscious for a like number of turns.

After the heroes know that the wall exists, they can see it shimmer faintly, like bits of moonlight reflected in unseen glass.

Examining the Wall

Once the heroes have found this mysterious barrier, they need to figure out how to get past it if they are to find Maeve. As with so many things in life, there is an easy way to get past the wall and a difficult one.

Pounding on the Wall: Those who take the time to examine the wall carefully discover that the barrier is as hard as a stone battlement but as smooth as glass. It is too slick to scale: spikes and other climbing implements cannot find a purchase and spells like *spider climb* fail against this magical barrier.

Measuring the Wall: The wall extends into the air higher than anyone can climb or fly and into the ground deeper than anyone can dig. It encircles the cottage at a distance of about a mile, giving it a circumference of more than three miles.

Divination: The mystical nature of the wall becomes apparent if a *detect magic* spell is cast, but the exact school of magic remains indeterminate—almost as if it were a product of a kind of magic that falls outside the ordinary categories.

If spells like *augury* are used to inquire about a way past the barrier, the characters receive the following information:

Only the blind shall pass
the moonlit wall.

Getting Past the Wall

In order to bypass this invisible barrier, the characters may attempt many tactics. Some will be more successful than others.

Physical attacks of any type, including magical spells like *fireball* and *lightning bolt*, have no effect on the wall. Even massive amounts of damage, as might be inflicted by felling a large tree on the shield, do nothing to the barrier. As far as physical force is concerned, this shield is invulnerable.

Attempts to use magical power to affect things beyond the circle also prove fruitless. Thus, it would not be possible to use a *detect traps* spell on an area inside the wall. Psionic powers and other spell-like abilities are also blocked by the barrier. Indeed, only sound and visible light are able to penetrate the magical barrier.

The circle can be brought down with powerful magic, like a *wish* spell. In addition, a *dispel magic* might be able to destroy it. In all such cases, the wall is assumed to have been cast by a 12th-level character.

The easiest way to get past this unseen barrier, however, is to simply not see it. This can be done by walking backwards through it, being blindfolded, or simply closing one's eyes while advancing. Anyone who cannot see the unseen barrier (so to speak) is not affected by it.

If the characters are having trouble getting past the wall, the Dungeon Master could simply have one of them fall through it accidentally. The hero could be searching the ground and just walk through it while looking away. Imagine the hero's frustration at than being separated from the rest of the party by the invisible wall!

The Veil of Vapors

The second barrier protecting Maeve's privacy is a thick curtain of vapor that looks very much like a wall of fog. Those who pass through the fog without the right precautions find themselves magically transported back outside the Unseen Wall. If they wish to continue their journey toward Maeve's cottage, they must get past the first barrier again.

If the heroes are tracking Arla, her tracks lead directly into the misty veil.

Finding the Veil

As the characters move forward, they come upon a shifting, rolling wall of mists. The Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players as an introduction to this scene:

You are clearly nearing the source of the smoke when you come upon a most unusual phenomenon. Spread across your path is a wall of boiling vapor. As white as newly-fallen snow, it ripples and churns with every breath of wind but seems unwilling to drift away or dissipate. Dark shapes appear to move slyly about within the miasma, but it may be nothing more than shadows and currents in this landlocked cloud.

It is quite likely that the players mistake these relatively harmless vapors for the infamous Mists themselves. In truth, they are simply another magical ward erected by the White Lady to protect herself.

Examining the Veil

There are many ways in which the adventurers might go about gleaning information about the Veil of Vapors.

Divination: Again, *detect magic* reveals that the barrier is indeed enchanted but not the precise nature of its dweomer. The characters can, however, determine (either by spell or by trial and error) that the vapors are not poisonous in any way.

Should the heroes opt to use an *augury* or similar spell, they receive the following clue about the misty barrier before them:

When gray mists dance about the earth
and even breath betrays you,
let death be your guide.

Probing the Veil: The heroes might wish to see what effect the mists have on physical objects which are either thrown or thrust into them. This could involve poking a long pole into the cloud or tossing stones into it. As long as the object sent into the mists is inanimate, it is not affected.

Those with trained dogs, familiars, or other such animals might opt to send one of these creatures into the mists. Any such action results in the creature vanishing (as described below). Ropes tied to such explorers mysteriously sever, as if by an amazingly keen knife.

Getting Past the Veil

As soon as someone enters the mysterious vapors, the Dungeon Master should take that player aside and read him or her the following text:

As soon as you step into the mists, all sounds dissipate, leaving you in complete silence. The unearthly vapors swirl around you, and unseen fingers trace intricate patterns on your face, raising goose bumps on your bare flesh. Something lightly tugs at your feet, almost as though you are walking through thick mud.

Almost immediately, your eyes and throat begin to burn as you breathe in the thick cloud. Smoky tendrils of fog slither into your mouth and nose, leaving you coughing and choking, desperate for air.

The player must now attempt a saving throw vs. spell. A successful save indicates that the character has been turned around. He or he steps out of the vapor very near where he or she stepped into it.

If the character was standing at the edge of the mists and breathing them in, a successful saving throw allows him or her to remain in place.

Suddenly, you stumble out of the mist onto a soft bed of cool grass, gasping for breath. As you look up, you realize that you are right back where you started! To your dismay, the strange mists still stand between you and the White Lady's home.

A failed saving throw, on the other hand, results in the character being instantly transported. He or she steps out of the mists only to discover himself or herself in the middle of the woods. At first, it might not seem as if anything has gone amiss. As soon as the hero can get his or her bearings, however, the character discovers that he or she is

back outside the unseen barrier, facing away from Maeve's cottage. If multiple characters are transported, they are each sent to different locations, though all nearby where they encountered the first barrier.

Coughing, you stumble out of the vapors into the midst of a forest. The swirling mists are nowhere to be seen, but then again, neither are your companions!

Anyone who holds his or her breath while walking through the mists is unaffected by them. This is not an easy thing to do, however, for the wall of vapor is fairly thick. In order to get through the cloud without taking a breath, the character must make two consecutive successful Constitution checks.

If the heroes search, they find no sign of Arla's tracks on this side of the Veil of Vapors.

The Bubbling Brook

After the characters have gotten past the Unseen Wall and the Veil of Vapors, they come upon Maeve's next defense: the Bubbling Brook. This stream is enchanted so that it can rise up and attack those who seek to cross.

Finding the Brook

When the characters come upon the brook, the Dungeon Master should read the following description aloud to the players:

Leaving the invisible barrier and the veil of mists behind, you press onward in the direction of the smoke plume. The air here is sweet with the scent of a blazing hearth and baking bread.

Even as you first hear the sound of running water, you come upon a wide, shallow stream. The bubbling water is quick moving and almost musical. Even at its center, the crystal-clear brook is no more than a foot deep. From shore to shore, however, it is at least twenty-five feet wide.

If the heroes investigate the brook closer (without touching the water), they notice something else:

Curiously, you catch a glint of something metallic embedded in the thick soil beneath the sparkling water about eight or nine feet from shore. It looks like a sword, but you cannot be sure from here.

In several places in the stream lie the armor and weapons of previous trespassers—those who were turned into the water creatures who guard this barrier.

Examining the Brook

The players will almost certainly want to learn the nature of the stream before taking any action. Depending upon the techniques that they employ, they may learn a number of things. If they are not careful, however, their examinations can prove dangerous or even fatal.

Divination: The water of the brook is clean and free of toxins. Thus, the druid's ability to spot impure water, or spells like *detect poison*, fails to indicate anything hazardous about the water, although it does detect as magical. An *augury* or similar spell reveals the following clue:

As the wise men say:
You are what you eat
and drink this day.

Drinking the Water: Drinking from this magical stream is not a wise thing to do. If any hero drinks the water from this brook, the Dungeon Master should read the following text:

At first, the water from the stream feels most refreshing and cool. Then, suddenly, a spasm of pain sears through your body. You gasp for air, but find yourself choking and unable to breathe. Tears begin to run from your eyes, and water begins to trickle from your nose and ears.

A *neutralize poison* or *dispel magic* spell cast within one round halts the progress of this fell magic. Failing that remedy, read the following text:

Then a cold shudder wracks your entire frame. You try in vain to scream as your clothes crumple through the water that was once your flesh. Everything you were carrying and wearing falls with a splash to the ground. In less than a minute, your entire body has been transformed into living water.

Take the player of the afflicted character aside and read him or her the following text:

No longer human, you turn your fluid gaze upon those who were once your allies and friends. In their place, you see only trespassers and enemies who must be utterly and immediately destroyed.

Anyone who sees the hero undergo this transformation should make a horror check. The Dungeon Master may opt to waive this requirement for any player who is carefully roleplaying the horror of seeing a close friend transformed into a hideous monster.

The poor character has just been very painfully transformed into a guardian being; it attacks at once. Though this creature is very like a water elemental, it should not be treated as a summoned or extraplanar creature.

Water Guardian: AC 2; MV 6, swim 18; HD 8; hp 50; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 5d6 (blow); SD +2 or better magical weapon to hit; SW must remain within 60′ of stream; SZ L (11′ tall); ML champion (16); Int low (6); AL N; XP 2,000.
Personality: Violent and territorial.

The water creature battles the party until it is destroyed. While it is not vulnerable to magical attacks designed to affect summoned creatures, it can be destroyed by a *dispel magic* spell powerful enough to affect a 12th-level enchantment.

Attempts to restore the character to his or her original form almost certainly fail. As a rule, nothing short of a *wish* fully reverses the effects of the enchanted water. A *limited wish* or similar spell might restore the character for a time. However, Maeve can lift the spell if asked, restoring the character to his or her original form (minus clothing and equipment, of course).

Touching the Water: Placing a finger in the water or making other slight contact with it is safe enough. Anyone who exposes his or her skin to the water for an extended period of time, however, is affected as described in "Drinking the Water." Furthermore, the magic of the brook affects any hero who attempts to wade through it. At this point, the Dungeon Master can read the following text to the player.

After you take a few steps out into the brook, the water becomes painfully cold. Immediately, freezing water begins oozing from your skin. All your clothes are completely drenched even though the cursed brook covers your only ankles. You gasp for air, but somehow you keep swallowing water, leaving you choking and coughing.

Again, the PCs have one round to administer magical aid. If they do not, read on:

The brook suddenly swirls around you in a whirling vortex. It rises up and up—or do you sink down to greet it? You can make out several faces in the formerly clear water as they wash over you, their mouths wide open, screaming in silent agony.

At this point, the hero melds with the water, becoming part of the guardian of this deadly barrier; his or her friends should roll (or act out) horror checks.

Getting Past the Brook

Obviously, the party will have to find some way to cross the brook other than wading.

Bridges, Stilts, and So On: Getting across the brook by leaping from stone to stone (assuming they can find and safely place appropriately sized stepping stones), using stilts (be sure to ask for Dexterity checks), making a bridge, or other techniques which involve indirect contact with the water prevents anyone from being transformed. However, such actions cause a water creature (the remains of an earlier traveler who was transformed into water) to rise from the stream and attack. The following text can be read to describe the appearance of this menace:

Suddenly, the rolling waters of this innocent-looking stream begin to churn and swirl. A pillar of glistening water rises high into the air and then begins to flow outward, taking on a disturbingly humanoid shape. Without waiting a fraction of a second, this watery doppleganger immediately lunges toward you with its rippling arms outstretched.

The Dungeon Master can call for fear checks at this point. If anyone in the party of adventurers is particularly squeamish or prone to hydrophobia, even a horror check might be in order.

More than one of these creatures guards this barrier. If the heroes again disturb the water after destroying the first water creature, another rises up to destroy the trespassers. If the heroes have a particularly hard time defeating the creatures, Maeve's messengers (from the "The Queen's Minions") could arrive just in time to save them. These shadow elves can call off the guardians with the phrase "Begone, in the name of Maeve, Princess of the Shee" (in the Arak language, of course).

Flying, Leaping, and Such: The only way to pass the brook without arousing the wrath of the protective spirits that dwell within it is to fly, leap, or otherwise cross over it without coming into contact with the water. Spells like *fly* or *jump* can be used for this, as might the ability to teleport. Very light characters might be thrown across the water by very strong ones, although the landing almost certainly involved hazards of its own. A carefully built bridge, one that never touches the water in any way, is time-consuming but does work; should the characters build one, Maeve's messenger arrives just as they finish it and prepare to cross.

The Queen's Minions

After the heroes bypass Maeve's barriers, they are greeted by one of her shee servants, who was sent to lead them to the cottage. When the heroes reach the far side of the Bubbling Brook, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players:

As you continue on your journey, the forest becomes thick around you, requiring you to constantly search the sky for the smoke plume in order to keep your bearings. During one such instance, you look back down to see a handsome young elf standing at ease a few yards in front of you. His pale hair and golden eyes seem almost luminescent in the darkness of the night, his flowing blue garments richly ornamented with silver and gold thread.

"I am Cedraq, servant and advisor to Queen Maeve," he says in a melodious voice. "Shall we go?" he continues, turning. "Her Majesty is expecting us."

Cedraq responds to all questions with the same answer: "Her Majesty will answer all your questions when we arrive."

Though this messenger seems to be alone, six other shadow elves hide in the trees nearby to protect him if necessary. If the characters attack the messenger, the other Arak let loose a storm of arrows upon them.

Arak, Shee (7): AC 6; MV 15; HD 7; hp 31 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (elfshot); SA spells, charm, fumble; SD +1 or better magical weapons to hit, immune to stone weapons, fire, and heat-based attacks; SW lead, sunlight; MR 15%; SZ M (6´ tall); ML steady (12); Int exceptional (16); AL N; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Charm*—The kiss of a shee requires recipient to successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a permanent *charm person* spell. *Fumble*—Anyone who directs a melee or missile attack at a shee must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fumble* spell. *Spells*—Victims suffer a –2 penalty to their saving throws against any charm or enchantment cast by a shee.

Spells (4/3/2/1): 1st—*charm person, friends, hypnotism, sleep;* 2nd—*bind, forget, scare;* 3rd—*hold person, suggestion;* 4th—*emotion.*

Personality: Calm and measured.

If the "heroes" do attack, Cedraq withdraws and heads toward the cottage. When the heroes push through the bushes surrounding Maeve's cottage, they find only another wall of mists. These vapors again transport them outside the first barrier. This time, however, the characters are not able to pass through the invisible wall at all. They are completely barred from entering Maeve's retreat.

If the heroes follow the messenger, he leads them directly to Maeve's cottage. When the heroes reach the garden surrounding the cottage, the Dungeon Master can read the following text:

Following Cedraq, you push your way through a dense layer of foliage and behold the source of the smoke—the chimney of a quaint little cottage. The building before you is surrounded by a wide garden of herbs, flowers, vegetables, and other plants.

The air in the garden is perfumed with the sweet fragrances of a dozen varieties of night-blooming flowers and the bitter aroma of various herbs. Apart from the great diversity of flora, there seems nothing unusual or threatening about the garden, although the essence of the various plants does make your head spin a bit.

In fact, the air in the garden is especially potent. So strong are the fragrances of the various plants that anyone breathing them is likely to fall victim to their perfume. While Maeve and the shee are immune to the effects of her garden, mortals almost certainly suffer effects similar to that of a *sleep* spell (though this one affects characters of any level).

Anyone who closely investigates the flowers must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or fall into a deep sleep. (Characters who can easily identify plants know automatically that they should not get too close to the dangerous blooms.) The normal resistances of dwarves and such apply here, as do any other bonuses to saving throws involving toxins. A successful saving throw indicates that the character develops a headache from the heady bouquet but suffers no other effects from the fragrances of the garden.

The plants actively target any individuals who threaten or attack Maeve and her messengers, causing such characters to make an additional saving throw each round with a cumulative –2 penalty (–2 the first round, –4 the second round, –6 the third round, and so on).

When the heroes reach the cottage, the Dungeon Master can read the following description aloud:

The cottage is a simple, pleasant-looking half-timbered structure with pristine white stucco walls and a thatch roof. The large chimney at one end pours a meandering plume of gray smoke into the night air. A flickering light washes warmly against the windows, showing clearly the illumination of a flaming hearth despite the closed curtains.

If the whole of the party is overcome by the garden, the adventure can continue with "Awakening." If not, the Dungeon Master can skip to the section entitled "The White Lady."

Awakening

There are many ways for the characters to come into this scene without being conscious. It is possible for the entire party to fall victim to the perfumes from the flowers that surround Maeve's cottage. If this happens, her shee servants bring the sleeping heroes into her home, where she revives them. If the characters were taken prisoner by either the muryan raiders from "Scene One: Briggdarrow" or the powrie scouts from "Scene Five: Wytchwood," Maeve may rescue the heroes and transport them back to her cottage. They awaken, safe and sound, in the warmth of her home.

In either case, read the following description to the players as their characters begin to awaken. It should be directed at the character with the highest Constitution score, for he or she is the first to revive.

You hear a high, sweet voice singing an old, old song—one you can barely remember from your childhood. Gradually, the darkness around you begins to lessen as you drift back to consciousness. Despite a pounding headache and the hammering pulse in your ears, you are finally able to open your eyes a bit.

After so long in the dark, your eyes are dazzled by a warm, amber glow all around you—undoubtedly the product of a crackling hearth. As your eyes become accustomed to the light, the smell of fresh bread soothes your nerves and eases the pain in your temples.

Still groggy, you become aware of a warm mug being pressed to your lips. A sweet, minty draught trickles into your mouth as cool, delicate hands stroke your brow. While it might be prudent to resist these attentions, your body has no will to do so.

The character drifts in and out of consciousness a few times before fully reviving. The magical sleep which has come over the hero is particularly difficult to shake off, so it is impossible for him or her to resist Maeve's care. When the hero has had a few minutes to come to himself or herself, the adventure can continue.

The White Lady

If all the characters succumbed to the magical slumber, they wake up in Maeve's parlor, as described below. In this case, adjust the boxed text slightly to omit Cedraq. If the heroes resisted the flowers, proceed with this encounter as written. It is assumed that this encounter is more or less amicable. If the characters did something like smash through the windows into Maeve's house or attack her messenger, then the Dungeon Master should change the tone of the encounter to reflect Her Majesty's displeasure.

The Dungeon Master should be aware that Maeve has been monitoring the progress of the heroes as they drew near her home. She definitely intervenes if the characters do something like set her house on fire or set to destroying her garden, as she has little tolerance for guests with bad manners.

If the heroes were following Cedraq, he leads them directly to Maeve's parlor. The Dungeon Master can read the following text to the players at this point:

Cedraq leads you into the cottage and directly into a pleasant parlor. A blazing fire in the brick hearth spreads warm amber light across the room's simple pine furnishings. Flowering plants stand in every corner, filling the air with a pleasant, if somewhat overwhelming, fragrance. The staccato popping of the fireplace produces a pleasant, relaxing background of delicate sounds.

"Queen Maeve will be with you momentarily. Please make yourselves comfortable," he says, motioning toward the sofa. The elf messenger then bows and withdraws silently from the room.

If the heroes have Kian with them, Arla jumps out of hiding (behind the sofa) at this point and runs straight to her brother. If asked about their hostess, Arla knows nothing. She awoke here only a little while ago and hid when she heard people approaching.

If Kian is not with the heroes, Arla remains hidden behind the couch. She is a little bit frightened of the heroes, but if they mention her brother or the village of Briggdarrow, she accepts them completely. She can give the heroes much the same information that her brother can. (Use the answers from "Kian McCollin" in "Scene One: Briggdarrow.")

If they ask, Arla tells the heroes about her journey to find the White Lady and ask for her help. The Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players, remembering that this

dialogue is being spoken by a traumatized little girl who has blocked out much of the horrors of the last few days and nights.

"I was scared. I knowed that the White Lady could help us, e'en if people say she's a witch. While I were lookin' for her, I come to the attention o' the goblins. Hideous creatures they was, all twisted an' ugly. I run from 'em, but they had snares set. I got caught in one, hurt my leg real bad, I did. Wanna see?

"A dozen o' the horrible beasties closed in 'round me. I guessed they were gonna eat me or sumptin. One of 'em raised up a bent ol' knife. I remember screamin'—an' backin' away. When it stabbed down wit' the knife, sumptin stopped it. I din't know why they wasn't followin', but I din't hang aroun' ta ask either. I took off runnin'. All of a sudden there was a big wall o' smoke aroun' me. I 'member seein' a bea-u-ti-ful lady, all in white. Next thing I knowed, I was here in the White Lady's cottage. She saved me, she did. So I don' care what the grown-ups say, she ain't no evil old witch."

Arla was actually extremely lucky that the goblins did not catch her. She accidentally backed through the first barrier, leaving the snarling creatures on the other side. When Arla reached the second barrier, Maeve could see that the girl was injured. Curious at what a mortal child could want at her refuge, the Faerie Queen transported Arla directly to the parlor where she could put the girl to sleep and treat her wounds. (If the characters check, they find nothing but a fully healed scar where Arla's leg was gashed.) She then left the child to rest and recover her strength and has not yet returned to question her.

After the heroes have had a few minutes to speak with the girl, Maeve's messenger reenters the room. When reading the following entry, the Dungeon Master should strive to make Maeve's voice as sweet and melodic as possible.

Cedraq suddenly comes back into the room and announces, "Her Majesty will see you now. Follow me." He then turns and heads down the hallway, leading you to a formal-looking dining room. The long, wooden table is laden with fruits and sweetbreads.

At the end of the table stands the most beautiful women you have ever seen. A full six feet in height, she has long white hair but youthful features. She looks neither human nor elf but of some third kindred that might be to elves as elves are to humans. Her unearthly perfection is such that you stare incredulously, looking for some flaw and finding none. Her silky blue gown shimmers with her every movement, sparkling like the surface of a mountain lake on a sunny day. A glorious perfume fills the air.

"I am Maeve," she says in a textured voice that might have been issued by some delicate woodwind, "I bid you welcome to my home, simple as it is. Please, join me," she says, motioning to a decanter of some pale wine. "I am sorry if my barriers were an inconvenience to you, but they are necessary for my safety."

During the meal that follows, Maeve makes casual conversation with the characters while they eat. (She only nibbles at a few berries or perhaps a light pastry.) Cedraq acts as waiter, pouring each character a glass of the excellent wine. (It has an elusive taste that tugs at the memory, like something tasted in childhood but long since forgotten.) Note that all the food and drink are faerie food; should any hero have the means to pierce through her enchantments via *true seeing* or some similar spell, they will see that all the elaborate viands are merely wafers of ordinary bread and the wines clear fresh water.

Questions and Answers

The headings below represent questions that the heroes are likely to ask during the meal and the answers that she provides. In phrasing her responses, the Dungeon Master should remember that the White Lady has the soul of a poet; she favors flowery prose and wistful turns of phrase, quoting often from favorite poems or snatches of ballads to make some point. Note also that Maeve does not lie to guests, although she may evade a direct answer; she can also tell when anyone is being less than honest with her.

Who Are You?

Although Maeve has already introduced herself, it is likely that the heroes want to know a little more about her. They may ask any number of questions in an attempt to learn her past. The following text

can be read to the players as an example of her answers.

"My name is Maeve. I am one of the Lords of the Arak, Princess of the Shee, ruler of the Seelie Court. Recently, I left my realm, what you call the Shadow Rift, to try to find out what my brother Loht is doing in the mortal lands."

Who Are the Arak?

"You call us 'elves' or 'the shadow elves,' but we are not as the elves of other lands. We are the Fey. The Arak. We do not age and we do not die, save by some rare mischance. It seems wondrous strange to me, who can recall five millennia with ease—although there are some among my people easily thrice my age, who still call me "young Maeve"—to see how quickly you are born, age, and die.

"It also seems odd how much alike you all are, at least on the outside. It is not so with us. Each of us changes over the long years. Our race is far more diverse than yours; we range in size from wee-folk like the powrie to those like myself, who match your size, and sometimes even larger.

"But then my people are not natives to this land. We came here several thousands of years ago from a world composed wholly of darkness. Since that time, we have lived apart from your race, having little to do with the world of mankind. From time to time we would visit this one or that, but never were stories of our existence taken seriously. Most of what we know of your people comes from humans who have found favor with us and were brought to live among us for a time."

Maeve's claim to have come into Ravenloft "thousands of years ago" might strike players who are familiar with the Demiplane of Dread as impossible, as Ravenloft has existed for only a few hundred years. Maeve's words, however, reflect the flow of time in the Shadow Rift, which is greatly affected by the temporal fugue that surrounds the Obsidian Gate. Thus, she is certainly not lying, as various psionic or magical means might show.

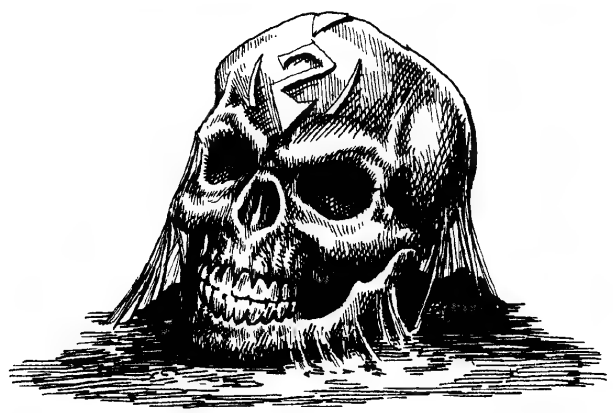
What Is the Seelie Court?

"Long ago the Arak were one people, united under the Erlking, my father. Now we are divided into the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. I rule one, while my brother Loht rules the other. The powrie, the muryan, the sith, the teg: all these give allegiance to my brother, the Shadow Prince, while the shee, the fir, the portune, and the alven belong to the Seelie Court; the brag go their own way, paying allegiance to neither but serving both. Beware the power of the Unseelie Court, for it has grown greatly over the last few years, until it has come to dominate almost all our land."

Why Do You Need the Barriers?

"There are many dangers in this land. I came here to find out what Loht was doing, and I did not wish to be disturbed by any of the quaint monsters who frequent these forests. I am sorry if my barriers inconvenienced you, but that was their purpose: to discourage uninvited guests.

"Then, too, there is this: My brother, for reasons unknown to me, is gathering together again all the regalia—the artifacts of power worn by our father so long ago. Only recently did he recover the Sword of Arak *after great labors. He knows that only I know where the* Crown of Arak *is hidden, and has sent out many spies to watch my movements; the barriers keep such at bay, unless Loht himself comes."*



Who Is Loht?

"Loht, Lord of the Sith, is my brother. When we came into this land, my father passed on to me the Crown of Arak *and to my brother the* Sword of Arak, *thereby decreeing that we should rule in his stead.*

"Our people, who had been one, divided, according to their nature. But ever since we came to this land from our old home, into the shadows and out from the darkness, the power of the Unseelie Court has waxed and that of my Seelie Court has waned. In the great convulsions which shook all the lands, a few seasons hence, Loht's sword was lost. Long he sought it in mortal lands, and only recently did he recover it after great labors, returning to put in motion some plan long pondered."

Who Attacked Briggdarrow?

It is assumed that this question is asked after Maeve has had a chance to learn something of the attack. She may have acquired her information from Arla, Kian's sister, or from the heroes themselves. Any description of the attack, its effects on the populace of Briggdarrow, or the muryan themselves is enough to allow them to Maeve to give the following response:

"All that I have heard leads me to believe that the village was attacked by the muryan. They are Arak, like myself, but devoted to war and battle. They support Loht but care nothing for good or evil, only the wild frenzy of combat."

Maeve clearly believes that her brother has commanded the muryan to attack as part of some larger plan. She does not know what it is, exactly, but she has begun to suspect that he plans to open the Obsidian Gate.

What Happened to the Folk of Briggdarrow?

If the heroes describe the state of the villagers to Maeve, she looks surprised. Clearly, these people were not great warriors who deserved to become changelings. Loht is obviously abusing the power to create changelings. Maeve does not know for certain why Loht would have done this. While it is clear that he is raising some sort of a changeling army, she can only guess at his ultimate goal.

"It sounds like they have been made into changelings, but that cannot be! Those villagers could not possibly all be master craftsmen and warriors worthy of becoming our servants. Whatever can Loht be up to?"

Who Attacked Us In the Forest?

As with the question about Briggdarrow, it is assumed that Maeve has some information upon which to base this answer—a simple description of the creatures' appearance and abilities will do.

"You were attacked by the powrie, a breed of Arak skilled in stealth and assassination. You are lucky to have survived their attacks. The men who were with them are changelings, rogues and killers from your world who were so skilled at their trade that the powrie transformed them, rewarding them for their devotion to the art of murder."

What Are Changelings?

The Dungeon Master should remember that Maeve does not look at the creation of changelings as an act which is in any way evil. Rather, she sees it as the ultimate compliment and a great reward for any mortal fortunate enough to undergo the magical transformation.

"My people believe that transforming a mortal into a changeling is the greatest honor possible. When the Arak find someone who is so skilled at his or her chosen craft, whatever that be, as to become the envy of all his or her peers, we seek out that person. Some we carry back with us for a time for companionship. Others, if we find them worthy, we offer a special morsel, then sever their shadows and take them back to our homeland. There, the shadow takes on its original form and can resume its work. The act of transformation strips away all distractions from the spirit,

allowing the changeling to focus only on his or her art. The body remains behind to carry on its dull little mortal life."

How Can We Transform Them Back?

Maeve looks surprised if the heroes ask this question, as if the thought never occurred to her before.

"Change them back? Why would anyone want to go back? What artist would give up the change to practice his or her art forever? I suppose such a thing could be done, but it seems a cruel thought."

What Is Loht Planning?

"I believe that Loht has managed to assemble almost all the pieces of the Regalia of Arak. *The only possible reason to bring these items together is to open the Obsidian Gate, but I cannot imagine why he would want to do that!*

What Is the Obsidian Gate?

"When my people came into this realm, we made use of a magical portal known as the Obsidian Gate. As soon as we were safely through this portal, my father sacrificed himself to close it behind us, trapping our former master, the sorcerer-fiend Gwydion, in his own dark realm. We have never dared to reopen it, lest Gwydion come through and subjugate us all once more."

How Do We Close the Gate?

"It is my belief that Loht has already assembled most of the magical items he needs to open the gate. Only one item remains hidden from him—the Crown of Arak. *This magical treasure will complete the regalia and allow him to operate the gate. Before I left my home, I hid the crown within the eternal fire in the Malachite Palace, where Loht himself now resides.*

"The fact that his agents, the powrie, are still lurking in this forest spying on me proves that he has not yet found the crown. If we are to stop my brother and save this world from Gwydion, the crown must be recovered.

"I cannot recover the crown myself, as Loht watches my every move. You, however, he would consider beneath his notice and hence you could move about and retrieve my crown. Then you must destroy it. It is my most prized possession, and along with the sword the chief potency of our realm, yet only thus can Loht be defeated.

Therefore, once you have recovered the crown, you must transport it to the Obsidian Gate and cast it in—like locking a door and slipping the key underneath. As soon as the crown is returned to the realm of shadows from which it came, the magical energies of that place will destroy it. When that is done, the gate will be forever closed."

Can Cedraq Go With Us?

Maeve does not want Cedraq to leave. She has very few attendants, so she is unwilling to let any of them go with the heroes.

"Cedraq and the other servants willingly followed me out of the Shadow Rift, thereby making themselves enemies of Loht. Arak do not kill other Arak; still, it would be very unpleasant for them to return."

What Might We Find Inside the Rift?

Maeve can provide the heroes with a very accurate description of the Shadow Rift. Indeed, so reliable is Maeve's chart that the Dungeon Master can simply show the players the map of Shadow Rift on page

57. Note that if Maeve actually draws them a map, she will orient it so East is at the top but will not think to mention this unless a thoughtful character asks, as all fey maps are so oriented. Thus it's possible that characters who assume the top of the map points north may get turned around, especially in the absence of the sun.

Do You Have Allies in the Rift?

"I am not without friends in my homelands, it is true. My brother is dominant for the time, but many fey still respect my authority.

"Here," she says, taking off her ring and holding it out to you. The round black gem set in the center reflects no light from the flickering fire, appearing to be made of the shadows themselves. "Show this to any of my supporters, and they will assist you if they can."

Maeve can also describe the different breeds to the heroes but will only do so if they ask. Base your descriptions on the entries in Appendix Four: Monstrous Compendium. She will not describe any of the shadow elves' special vulnerabilities, even those of the Unseelie Court; such would go against the Law of Arak (described on page 141).

How Do We Get Into the Shadow Rift?

While the White Lady can tell the heroes how to reach the Fracture, she cannot provide a map of the place itself. For some reason (which she is unable to fathom), Maeve has no memory of having explored the Fracture or passed through it, although she knows that she has done so. This phenomenon is explained in more detail in "Scene Seven: The Fracture."

What Do We Do With the Children?

Though shadow elves rarely have anything to do with other races, Maeve finds the children charming and would not think of abandoning them. She has not yet decided whether or not to take them with her when she eventually returns to the Shadow Rift. Should the heroes voice concern over the children's present well-being and future, she offers the following solution:

"They can stay with me. Perhaps if I tire of them I can find some suitable human family to care for them. Should your mission succeed, I might be able to restore their parents to their normal state. Then the children can return home, if they wish it."

What Maeve Does Not Say

Although Maeve does not lie to guests, there are some secrets that she does not share with them. As a rule, these are things that might be turned against her people. For example, Maeve does not reveal that sunlight is anathema to her people. Further, she does not tell the players about the special types of weapons or attacks that can be used against the various breeds, even the sith and powrie.

Maeve considers all of the shadow elves as her people. The muryan and powrie obey Loht's commands, not hers, but they are still Arak. To reveal to the heroes a weakness that could be used to destroy any of her race is just impossible for the Faerie Queen.

Hitting the Trail

When all is said and done, Maeve sends the players on their way with the following words of guidance:

"The map I have given you will lead you into the Shadow Rift and the realm of the Arak. Be careful, though, for this is also the route that Loht's folk take when they come into the world of men."

Once the heroes set out for the Fracture, tie up any loose ends from previous encounters, then proceed with "Scene Seven: The Fracture."

The Shadow Rift
Depth
-1500 feet
-2000 feet
-2500 feet
-3000 feet
Necropolis
Anvolee
Keening
Hidden River
Lake Kronov
The Fracture
Falkovnia
Tepest
The Descent
Great Cascade
Malachin Palace
Nova Vaasa
Borca
Obsidian
Barovia
10 Miles

Scene Seven: The Fracture

It is easy to go down into Hell; night and day, the gates of dark Death stand wide; but to climb back again, to retrace one's steps to the upper air—there's the rub, the task.

—Vergil
The Aeneid

The Fracture is a secret complex of caverns linking the Shadow Rift to the domain of Tepest. Even when the border of either (or both) of these domains closes, passage through the Fracture remains unimpeded.

Background

Adventurers most likely reach the Fracture after a visit with Maeve. If the heroes have gotten off the track of the adventure, the Dungeon Master might be able to get things rolling again by having them find it on their own. The problem with that solution, however, is that it probably eliminates the encounter with Maeve. As the information that the heroes get from her is vital to the completion of the adventure, the Dungeon Master must find some other way to introduce it. Since this can be difficult, an optional encounter ("The Hermit") has been included within this scene to help resolve such difficulties and provide additional information.

Magic and Memory

A strange enchantment hangs over the Fracture, affecting the minds and recollections of those who explore these caverns. Spells such as *detect magic* and *detect charm* reveal a faint presence of magic within the Fracture but nothing more specific. Spells like *augury* give the players the following clue if used to discern the nature of this magic:

Beware the winding earth-womb
down the depths toward
shadow's gate:
dark birth of ignorance.

What does the message mean? It means that anyone who travels through the Fracture, a region of endless darkness, loses all memory of the passage immediately after stepping out of it and into the light of day (or twilight, in the case of the Rift). This is not to say that the heroes will not remember having been through the Fracture, only that they will recall none of the details of the journey. They will remember traveling to it and entering it, then nothing else until emerging on the other side.

Nothing can restore a person's memory of the journey through the Fracture. Not even psychic surgery and other psionic powers will suffice.

Indeed, even if the heroes made maps to retrace their steps, these immediately lose their pigments and become blank sheets of paper. There is no way for the characters to make any type of map that records their progress through the Fracture.

Through the Fracture

When the heroes actually step into the Fracture, they immediately find themselves exiting the cavern on the other side. To them, it seems as though no time has passed since they entered the mysterious cavern opening. At this point, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players:

You step out of the tunnel and into a world unlike any you have ever seen before. At your back, a sheer cliff rises high into the sky before vanishing into a boiling sea of dark, black clouds with no sign of a moon.

Somehow, you have entered the Shadow Rift, but you have no memory of the Fracture itself. However, the journey has still managed to leave its impression upon you.

At this point, the Dungeon Master should point out that some things about the characters have changed. First of all, they are each missing two days' worth of food. More importantly, however, many of them are battered and bleeding. To determine what evidence of their dangerous trip remains, the Dungeon Master should roll 1d20 twice on **Table 3** (or choose two results) for each character. If the result does not apply for some reason, then nothing happens to that hero.

These results are not intended to kill or even maim the heroes but to confuse and frighten them. If the Dungeon Master does not like the result rolled, another can be chosen. Additionally, this could also be an opportune time to rid the party of one or two troublesome items.

Table 3:
Journey Through the Fracture

Roll 1d20	Effect
1	Hero's remaining supplies are infested with weevils, maggots, or some other nasty creatures.
2	1d4 charges lost from one of hero's magical items.[1]
3	One of hero's potions is missing.[1]
4	Hero must attempt a madness check.
5	Hero has gained a new potion.[1]
6	Hero has gained knowledge of new nonweapon proficiency.[1]
7	Hero has taken 1d6 points of burn damage; clothes are charred and smoking.
8	Hero has taken 2d6 points of cold damage; frost has accumulated on clothing, equipment, and hair.
9	Hero has taken 3d6 points of acid damage; clothing and outer equipment are partially eaten away.
10	Hero gains a point in a single prime requisite score for one day.[1]
11	Hero is carrying a box with a strange deck of cards wrapped in silk. (This result can occur only once.)[2]
12	Hero has a long, jagged scar across forehead; must be magically healed within two days, or Charisma permanently lowers one point.
13	Hero is blind or deaf (as per the spells).
14	One of hero's prime requisites lowers 1d4 points[1]; points regained at a rate of one per day.
15	Hero has only 1d8 hit points left; bite marks cover skin and armor.
16	Hero has developed a phobia. Roll on **Subtable E.**
17–20	Roll on subtable for hero's class.

[1]Roll randomly (with Dungeon Master's discretion).
[2]See "Tarokka Cards" section beginning on page 60.

Subtable A:
Wizard

Roll 1d6	Result
1	Page was burned out of spellbook. (Hero loses one spell permanently if it is not memorized).[1]
2	Hero scribed a new spell in spellbook with a red, spidery writing.[1]
3	Hero has used two memorized spells from each casting level.[1]
4	Hero has used all memorized spells.
5	Hero has a strange rune written on forehead; he casts at 2 levels higher for 1d4 hours, then rune disappears.
6	Hero has gained an unusual new familiar.[1]

[1]Roll randomly (with Dungeon Master's discretion).

Subtable B:
Warrior

Roll 1d6	Result
1	Hero's weapon is broken.[1]
2	Hero has gained a new weapon proficiency and has the new weapon in hand.[1] The new weapon is forged of a strange, black, glassy substance (functions as normal).
3	All of hero's missiles are gone.
4	Portion of armor is missing.[1]
5	Hero goes into a berserker rage the next time battle ensues. He or she repeatedly screams "No! Not again!" and "Hurry, flee from the darkness!" until all foes are destroyed. (This result can occur only once.)
6	Hero is wearing a new magical helm.[1]

[1]Roll randomly (with Dungeon Master's discretion).

Subtable C:
Priest

Roll 1d6	Result
1	Hero's holy symbol has increased in size by a factor of ten.
2	Hero has used two prepared spells from each casting level.[1]
3	Hero has used all prepared spells.
4	Hero is also carrying the holy symbol of an opposing faith.[1]
5	Hero gains access to a completely new sphere for 2d4 days and has chosen one of those spells.[1]
6	Hero's chosen spells have all been switched.[1]

[1]Roll randomly (with Dungeon Master's discretion).

Subtable D:
Rogue

Roll 1d6	Result
1	Hero's lockpicks are missing.
2	Hero's hands are webbed for 1d4 days; he or she makes all related thieving skill checks at a –25% until then but moves at double normal speed in water.
3	Hero has become paranoid; for next 1d4 days, he or she is sure someone is watching him or her at all times.
4	Hero makes a noise when he or she walks (clanging, swishing, clapping, etc.)[1] and cannot move silently for one full day.
5	Hero's skin has blackened all over for 1d4 days, allowing him or her to hide in shadows with a +25% bonus.
6	Hero's voice has become so melodic that it acts as a *charm person* spell for the next 1d3 hours.

[1]Dungeon Master's choice.

Subtable E:
Phobias

Roll 1d6	Result[1]
1	Necrophobia (fear of dead things)
2	Aichmophobia (fear of sharp instruments)
3	Hydrophobia (fear of water)
4	Hemophobia (fear of blood)
5	Zoophobia (fear of animals)
6	Nyctophobia (fear of darkness)

[1]Dungeon Master determines intensity and game effects of phobia.

Tarokka Cards

Dungeon Masters who have a copy of the tarokka deck (originally published in the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set) should present these to the player whose character possesses the silk-wrapped cards. Although the hero has no memory of actually getting the cards, he or she remembers being told how they work.

Those without such a deck can use a deck of playing cards to simulate the mysterious tarokka deck. The effects of the deck are described in the "The Warrior's Deck" section. If no deck of cards is available to the Dungeon Master when the box is opened, then the cards within have no unusual properties.

The Warrior's Deck

Whenever the party is engaged in combat, the holder of the deck can use one action to shuffle them and draw off the top card. (If not in combat, the cards have no effect.) Depending upon the card drawn, the following magical effect is invoked:

Any Numbered Sword (or Club)

A faint yellow glow, visible only to the dealer, appears around the hand holding the card. Any nonmagical melee weapon employed by the holder of the deck or someone he designates at the time of the draw gains a magical "plus" equal to half the value of the card rounded up. This bonus lasts until the end of the current battle.

Any Numbered Coin (or Spade)

A faint green glow, visible only to the dealer, appears around the hand holding the card. Any nonmagical missile weapon employed by the holder of the deck or someone he designates at the time of the draw gains a magical "plus" equal to half the value of the card rounded up. This bonus lasts until the end of the current battle.

Any Numbered Star (or Diamond)

A faint red glow, visible only to the dealer, appears around the hand holding the card. The next enemy whose bare skin is touched by the dealer's bare hand suffers damage equal to the value of the card. This touch causes no visible wound, but it is still searingly painful to the victim.

Any Numbered Glyph (or Heart)

A faint blue glow, visible only to the dealer, appears around the hand holding the card. The next ally whose bare skin the dealer touches heals a number of hit points equal to the value of the card. This touch causes no visible manifestation, but it spreads a sense of warm relief over the subject.

Any Crown or Archetype (or Face Card)

The dealer is compelled to draw another card. The normal effects of this second card are doubled. If the next draw is also from the high deck, all of the cards, the silk they were wrapped in, and the silver box fade away. The character's time with them is done, so they have moved on to another.

Moving On

Your own lights reveal a wide, cobblestone road stretching forward from the cave into a weird, twisted forest. Slender, gnarled trees of a species unknown to you form a tight tangle that quickly consumes the path. Hooting owls, creaking insects, and countless unseen animals fill the air with their calls, while the cloyingly sweet aroma of night-blooming plants turns your stomach.

The heroes have now entered the Shadow Rift and are ready to either begin the next part of the adventure in Act Two: Realm of Shadows or proceed to the optional section "The Hermit" for additional information.

The Hermit

This optional section allows the Dungeon Master to deliver information that the heroes might have missed in previous encounters. The hermit encounter should occur soon after the heroes step out of the Fracture.

Not far off the path ahead, you see the warm glow of a small cooking fire. As the light dances across the surrounding trees, a thousand tiny flashes wink like fireflies on a warm summer's evening.

Sitting near the fire is a slender man, bundled in fur blankets. At your approach, the old man looks up at you with obviously blind, white eyes. The harshness of his withered features makes a marked contrast to the soft, diffuse light of the fire.

This encounter can be played in two ways, depending on the past events of the adventure.

Filling in the Gaps

In all likelihood, the heroes entering this area have already learned what is going on in the Shadow Rift (more or less) through their conversations with Maeve. If this is not the case, the Dungeon Master should use this encounter to present that information to the player characters.

Otherwise

Assuming that the heroes have talked with Maeve, this encounter can proceed as follows.

What He Knows

The hermit, Kristov, has dwelt near the Fracture for many years and is not altogether sane. While he has watched the coming and goings of the Arak, he has never had much contact with them. In fact, the shadow elves know that he resides here, but they fear him too much to do anything to him. They believe that he is an incredibly powerful wizard and give him a wide berth. Their suppositions are not exactly true. In fact, the hermit is neither human nor alive; he is a wight. The Arak could almost certainly destroy him if they tried, but they do not know that.

Kristov has no interest in harming the adventurers—at least, not right away. He is content to be left alone. This is not to say that he does not defend himself or attack abusive characters, only that he is not going to lunge at the first person he sees. If the characters want to speak with him, he seems willing enough. Indeed, Kristov can be a valuable source of information. However, his price is terrible indeed.

If the heroes strike up a conversation with him, they may be able to learn a number of things. The following is a list of facts that the hermit is most likely to offer up to the heroes:

- *The Temporal Fugue*—Kristov is aware that time passes at a different rate in the Shadow Rift. He even has a pretty good idea of the ratio of this discontinuity. According to him, "those who live one year in the outside world miss over a quarter century in the Rift." He even chuckles that "the Arak have been in the world longer than the world has existed." Let the players try to figure that one out!
- *Harming the Arak*—Kristov has seen many of the Arak in combat. As such, he can tell the heroes their special vulnerabilities. "The dancin' men," he says, "bleed long when cut by mithral, the little dark flutterers have no belly for platinum, the minions of death fear only silver, and there's not a one of them that can stand the light of day!"
- *Additional Information*—Kristov can answer countless questions about the Arak beyond those presented above, based on information presented in Appendix Four. Unlike Maeve, the old hermit has no compunctions about telling the heroes how to harm or kill the Arak.

As a final bit of advice, Kristov says, "If you remember to honor the memory of Arak the Erlking, you'll find many more doors open to you down here." If the heroes ask for clarification, he responds that it is just a bit of good advice. (In fact, he has given them the password necessary to open the front door of the Malachite Palace.)

Paying the Piper

When the time has come to go, Kristov bids them farewell with a menacing smile and tells them that they are free to leave as soon as they have paid his price. At this point, the Dungeon Master should read the following text to the players:

As you prepare to depart, your attention is caught by a black cloud boiling up around the campsite. What appears at first to be a writhing mass of black tentacles is suddenly resolved into two dozen slithering shadow snakes. This sight is made all the more frightening by Kristov's ominous chuckling behind you.

"You've learned a great deal from me," he says in a creaking voice. His eyes blaze with a haunting, yellow light as his thin lips pull back to reveal an ocher row of needlelike teeth. "Now you will be payin' your debt before movin' on."

In exchange for the information he gave them, the old wight demands a life to feed upon. Any life will do—from that of an animal companion to that of a character. Of course, some actions may require powers checks.

Kristov does not accept offers like "let us go, and we will capture an Arak and drag it back here for you." He insists on being paid at once. In addition, the life he is given must have at least one-half Hit Die if it is not of other obvious value. A firefly, for example, would be unacceptable, unless it were the familiar of a mage or the like.

If the characters refuse, the dozens of shadow asps surrounding the area attack. At the same time, Kristov lashes out at the most vulnerable character.

Defeating the Asps: As long as Kristov "lives," an unlimited number of shadow asps can answer his summons. When the combat begins, a dozen of these creatures attack. Each round, 1d6 more of these dreadful serpents emerge from the forest. As soon as Kristov is destroyed, however, the asps fade away.

Shadow asps are detailed in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*:

Kristov (wight): AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (claws); SA energy drain; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapons, special immunities; SW can be turned, holy water, instantly slain by a *raise dead* spell; SZ M (5′ tall); ML elite (14); Int avg (9); AL LE; XP 1,400.

Notes: *Energy Drain*—Each successful hit by Kristov drains an experience level from the victim. Those who die from Kristov's energy draining powers do not become wights. Instead, they are transformed into shadow asps. *Special Immunities*—Kristov is immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells, poisons, and paralysis. *Holy Water*—Holy water burns Kristov for 2d4 points.

Personality: Reclusive and sinister.

Shadow Asps (12+): AC 2; MV 9; HD 1/2; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (bite); SA shadow toxin, surprise; SD half-damage from piercing weapons, cannot be turned; SW *light* spells; SZ T (6″–12″ long); ML fearless (20); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 65 each.

Notes: *Shadow Toxin*—Shadow asp's bite injects toxin that requires victim to successfully save vs. poison or become a shadow in 5 rounds (at which time a failed system shock roll results in death rather than transformation). A *dispel magic* or *remove curse* can halt the transformation while it is happening but cannot reverse it. Created shadows attack other heroes at once. *Surprise*—Opponents suffer a –5 penalty on surprise rolls. *Turning*—Shadow asps cannot be turned but are considered summoned creatures. *Light Spells*—Light spells used to slay shadow asps create no additional illumination.

Personality: Territorial and aggressive.

The Spoils of Victory: If the heroes linger after the battle, one of them notices a metal box within the flames of the campfire. The Dungeon Master should determine the character who notices this based on the actions declared by the players.

The box is neither locked nor trapped. Within it, the heroes find two metal daggers. These weapons appear to be ordinary silver, but they are not the least tarnished. Dwarf and gnome characters instantly recognize them as mithral, a rare and incredibly valuable metal not native to Ravenloft. Other characters may be able to spot this unusual metal through the use of magical spells or proficiency checks. These are +2 weapons which, because they are made of mithral, are especially deadly to the muryan.

Moving On

After the encounter with Kristov, the adventure can continue with Act Two: Realm of Shadows.

Scene Eight: Prisoners of Darkness

Wherever any one is against his will, that is to him a prison.

—Epictetus
Discourses

This scene can be used at any point when the heroes are captured by the Arak in Tepest. These events serve several purposes in the adventure. First, they allow the characters to witness firsthand the creation of changelings. Additionally, they allow the Dungeon Master to get the adventure back on track. Even if the players have gone off in an utterly unexpected route, they can be attacked and kidnapped by agents of the Arak and experience the events in this scene.

Getting Started

Although a number of scenes directly lead the heroes to this scene, it can also occur at any point when the heroes are captured by the Arak in Tepest.

Whatever route brings the heroes into this scene should leave them utterly at the mercy of the Arak. This means that the characters are most likely bound and unconscious at the start of the scene. If this is not the case, minor adjustments may have to be made by the Dungeon Master.

With this in mind, the Dungeon Master should begin by reading the following text to the players.

You awaken in the center of a strange campsite. It is difficult for you to see much of the place, however, for your head and arms have been secured in solid stocks which smell of newly cut timber. Even breathing is difficult, since a tight gag has been fitted across your mouth.

What you can see of the camp has an impromptu air about it. Tents of a gossamer fabric and light bundles of supplies lie scattered about. The chill night air seems totally unaffected by the handful of almost dainty campfires that scent the air with slender coils of smoke.

A number of creatures move back and forth, paying little or no attention to you. Some of these look human, others give the impression of elvish blood, and the rest look like winged dolls who flit about like fairies or pixies.

Since the heroes are gagged and more or less unable to communicate normally in this scene, the DM should keep "table talk" restricted to a minimum as well to reflect this.

If they lost their equipment having been captured by the goblins, they notice it piled on the ground near by. (Well, most of it anyway.)

Bad Tidings

The Dungeon Master should give the characters a chance to come to grips with their situation. If they take the time to look carefully at the demihumans, the Dungeon Master should provide them with more detailed descriptions of their captors. Such information can be gleaned from the descriptions of the muryan, powrie, and changelings (muryankin and powriekin) found in Appendix Four at the end of this book.

The Stocks

Getting free of the stocks is not an easy thing to do. They are well designed and solidly built. Still, it is almost certain that one or more of the heroes will attempt it.

Simply slipping out of the stocks is almost impossible. While a skilled thief might be able to contort his or her hands enough to get them free, it is not very feasible to do the same with his or her head! Only by picking the lock on the side can someone then pop open the stocks and free a head. Pulling out a hand requires a special Dexterity check. Such a check can be attempted only by rogues, and even then it is made at one third the normal value (rounded up). Thus, a thief with a Dexterity of 18 would have a 6-in-20 chance of being able to wriggle an arm out of the stocks. If both arms can be freed, the character still needs to make a successful open locks roll to pick the lock on the side of the stock. Considering the fact that this lock must be picked blind and almost certainly with improvised tools at best, suitable penalties should be assessed by the Dungeon Master.

Characters may also attempt breaking out of the stocks. This requires a successful bend bars/lift gates roll at half the normal chances of success. (The character's position makes it difficult for him or her to exert much leverage without breaking his or her neck.) Characters may not combine their strengths on these rolls. (Each stock is constructed separately to foil just such attempts.)

Of course, even a hero that slips free of the stocks is unlikely to be able to do much good—unarmed, unarmored, and surrounded by shadow elves. A heroic dash for a weapon invites the dancing men to swoop in and attack while the powrie divide themselves between harassing the

escapee and guarding the other prisoners. Barring any brilliant maneuvers and dice rolls, the hero will probably have to surrender or be rendered unconscious. In either case, the hero will be clapped in the stocks once more, with only enough first aid to prevent death.

The powrie are sadistic creatures who enjoy the predicament, so they buzz about the heroes' heads, as if they would strike at them, veering away at the last second and perhaps plucking a hair or poking an eye. They laugh conspiratorially and take great pleasure in characters who grow angry and struggle against their bonds and gags. They can hover before the heroes' faces, leer into their eyes, and whisper hints of what is to come, saying things like, "Don't worry, you won't be in those stocks long," or, "Show some appreciation! We're about to bestow the greatest gift you've ever received, undeserving as you are." They can even point at a changeling and say, "See that human over there? You'll be just like him soon enough!" The powrie might even indulge themselves in a sadistic little game: They pick up pebbles and dare each other to hit this hero in the forehead or that hero in the mouth, gradually moving to larger stones that inflict 1 point of damage when they strike; just before the procession begins, they will begin to eye even larger rocks.

The muryan can drive the heroes to distraction with their unnerving humming, especially if they tend to move around behind the heroes. They might force the heroes to place their feet just so, or they might seize some of them by the hair and shear it off as some sort of trophy. The muryan might decide to spar dangerously close to the heroes or demonstrate their swordsmanship with a flurry of sweeps mere inches from the heroes' heads. If you want to deprive the heroes of any of their equipment, the muryan might paw through it right in front of them, claiming obviously useful pieces and tossing the "worthless" items into the woods. One of them might even pick up a hero's sword, bringing over to him and snapping it in two before his eyes!

When it is time for the procession, the various shadow elves and faeriekin nearby abruptly halt their activities as if harkening to some unheard signal. The powrie giggle evilly and buzz away, the muryan whisper amongst themselves and then solemnly and gracefully withdraw, and the changelings quietly walk into the darkness and out of sight. Dreadful silence falls over the scene. The moment of truth has come. . . .

The Procession

After an hour or so, they notice a change in the atmosphere of the camp. To begin with, they no longer see any signs of the inhabitants. Either they have all vanished, or they are gathering somewhere out of sight. Once this sinks in, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players:

Suddenly, the scattered campfires begin to ripple as if buffeted by a stiff wind. Then, one by one, they are snuffed with a throaty "whoosh!" Less than a minute later, you are left alone in almost absolute darkness.

Soon, a procession of three hooded figures marches into view. The ones in front and rear hold a single black candle in both hands. It is difficult to see the features of these tall, human-sized creatures in the flickering light of the tapers, but you believe the candle-bearers are women. You cannot see the features of the one who comes between.

The Dungeon Master can give the players a few seconds of foreboding here. The hooded men are a sith and two sithkin, and it is their intent to transform the characters into changelings.

Almost nothing the characters do disrupts the procession. They can shout, threaten, struggle to break out of the stocks, or try and blow out the candles—all to no avail.

The procession passes in front of you, then stops. An eerie silence falls. The two pale women produce more of the black candles from somewhere within their robes and flit silently about, placing one in the sconces secured to the side of each stock. Your mind begins to wander as you watch the women move gracefully about their work; a warm tingle races through your body, followed by a sense of pleasurable lethargy. Clearly, some dark magic is at work.

Then the third hooded figure steps forward, holding a small black piece of cake palm-upward on his black-gloved hand. He looks at you for the first time, smiles, and begins to speak in a gentle, soothing voice. "You are rarely favored, mortal. Few indeed are invited to join our court. What kin will you join on the other side, I wonder? Come, eat, and we will soon find out." With that, he holds the succulent morsel of crumbly, black cake just before your lips, where its enticing order makes your mouth water.

The character being tempted with the faerie cake must make a Wisdom check each round, with a cumulative –1 penalty beginning the second round, to be able to resist the sith's offering. Should a hero fail his or her Wisdom check or decide to eat the cake, take that character aside and read him or her the following text:

Never have you tasted such unimaginable delights! You feel weak from ecstacy, or you would cry out, or sing. All your senses seem supernaturally sharp, heightened by the unearthly taste—the feel of rough wood on your neck and wrists, the delicate perfumes the pale women wear, the very sounds of the night that you never heard before. The scene before you grows crystal-sharp, as you see one of the sithkin women—how you know they are called that you cannot say—raise a gleaming sickle and step behind you, out of your line of view. You gasp as a sharp thrill of pain runs through you. You feel somehow . . . lighter . . . as your consciousness fades.

Repeat the process with each character.

At this point, the heroes almost certainly expect that they are about to reach the end of their allotted years. All things being equal, this would probably be the case. However, that is not how things work out.

Enter the White Lady

Maeve has been keeping a close watch on Loht's minions, and at this point she intervenes, having decided that the heroes might make useful agents to send against Loht. Characters who succumbed to the faerie cake will retain only a vague memory of a woman in white stepping into the clearing and demanding their release. While the sith, powrie, and muryan owe their primary allegiance to Loht, they are not prepared to defy Arak's daughter to her face and, believing their work already done, release the strickened heroes and depart.

The player characters awaken in Maeve's cottage, as described in Scene Six, except that the heroes are now shadowless. (It may take them some time to realize this; call for horror checks when the truth sinks in.) The characters are now trapped in a stage halfway between their old lives and their future existence as changelings. Maeve's magic has delayed the change, permitting them to retain much of their original personality, but she warns them that over time they will sink into apathy like the good folk of Briggdarrow. Their only hope to avoid that fate is to journey into the Shadow Rift, locate their changeling selves, and return with them to the mortal world. If nothing else, this unfortunate turn of events should give the heroes an added incentive to venture into the homeland of the Arak.

Statistics

This section of the adventure is likely to leave the characters with little to do other than struggle with their bonds and wish they could escape. It is this very helplessness and the alienation that they feel during their captivity that makes this scene so effective. Should one of the heroes manage to get free, the powrie, muryan, and changelings attack and attempt to recapture him or her.

Changeling, Powriekin: AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d3/1d3/1d3 (darts); SA backstab (+4 attack, 3× damage); SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, move silently (75%), hide in shadows (75%); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CE; XP 270 each.

Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Special Equipment: Daggers and darts (coated in type-O poison).

Arak, Powrie: AC 2; MV 9, fly 15 (A); HD 5; hp 15 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1 point (dagger) or 1d4 (bite); SA spells, fear, backstab, shriek; SD +3 or better weapon to hit, immune to steel, electricity, and lightning; SW platinum, sunlight; MR 45%; SZ T (1′ tall); ML fanatic (18); Int high (14); AL CE; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Bite*—The venomous bite of a powrie inflicts 1d4 points of damage and forces foe to save vs. poison to avoid being blinded (as per the spell). *Spells*—Powrie can cast the spells listed below as 5th-level mages. *Fear*—At will, powrie can show a menacing grin that acts as a *fear* spell. *Backstab*—Triple damage. *Shriek*—Powrie can emit a high-pitched shriek, causing all opponents within 30 feet to save vs. spell or go deaf (as per the *deafness* spell).

Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Special Equipment: Daggers and darts (coated in type-O poison).

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*audible glamer, change self, phantasmal force, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern, invisibility*; 3rd—*spectral force.*

Changeling, Sithkin (2): AC 8; MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 9 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (sickle); SA spells, command undead; SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, undead friendship; MR 15%; SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int genius (17); AL LE; XP 270 each.

Notes: *Command Undead*—Sithkin can command undead as an evil priest of 7th level. *Undead friendship*—no undead of less than domain lord stature will ever attack a sithkin.

Personality: elegant but morbid.

Spells (3/2/1): chill touch (×3), *spectral hand* (×2), *vampiric touch.*

Arak, Sith: AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8 (needle-sharp rapier); SA spells, gaze, death aura; SD parry, +1 or better magical weapons to hit, immune to steel weapons (even magical ones), fire, and heat, silent movement (75%); SW silver weapons, sunlight; MR 30%; SZ M (6′ tall); ML fearless (19); Int genius (17); AL LE; XP 6,000.

Notes: *Gaze*—Any who meet a sith's piercing gaze must save vs. spell or lose his or her nerve, behaving as if under a *fumble* spell. *Death Aura*—At will, a sith can force all living creatures within 30 feet to make immediate fear checks. *Parry*—Sith may forgo any or all of their melee attacks in a round in order to parry, with a successful parry negating a melee attack.

Personality: cold, calculating, elegant.

Spells (4/3/2/1): chill touch (×4), *spectral hand* (×3), *vampiric touch* (×2), *enervation.*

Arak, Muryan: AC 2; MV 15; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA spells, dance, slow, deafness, blindness; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, lightning, and electricity; SW mithral, sunlight; MR 15%; SZ M (5′ tall); ML fanatic (17); Int high (13); AL CN; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Dance*—Anyone struck by the muryan in melee must save vs. spell or begin to dance (–4 penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class). *Slow*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must save vs. spell or be *slowed* for the duration of the combat. *Deafness*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *deafness* spell. *Blindness*—Anyone struck by a muryan in melee must save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *blindness* spell.

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*fire burst, magic missile* (×2), *shield*; 2nd—*flaming sphere, stinking cloud*; 3rd—*fireball.*

Changeling, Muryankin: AC 5; MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 26 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4 (bastard sword) or 1d8/1d8 (spear); SA battle frenzy (+2 on attack and damage rolls); SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CN; XP 270 each.

Personality: Chaotic and violent.

Special Equipment: Bastard sword and spear.

These shadow elves attempt to capture the escaping prisoners and force them back into the stocks. They try to avoid killing their captives, as Loht finds changelings more valuable than saugh.

Continuing the Adventure

From here, the adventure resumes with the heroes in the company of Maeve. These events are depicted in "Scene Six: The Witch's Lair."

If All Else Succeeds

Undoubtedly, some heroes will thwart every attempt to subdue them and/or steal their shadows! It is not strictly necessary for them to lose their shadows at all, but if the Dungeon Master wishes to add this element to the adventure and the adventurers prove impossible to capture, drive them back to the Fracture with overwhelming forces of powrie or saugh, then repeat the experience detailed under "Through the Fracture" (page 58), except they awaken in Maeve's cottage ("The White Lady," page 51), minus their shadows.

Obsessed by a fairy tale, we spend
our lives searching for a magic door
and a lost kingdom of peace.
—Eugene O'Neill
More Stately Mansions

Act Two
Realm of Shadows

Heroes in the Shadow Rift

The Shadow Rift is not the world of men. It is a place born of darkness in a region where mortal creatures were never meant to dwell. Thus, as the heroes explore this chasm, the Dungeon Master should keep in mind the perpetual darkness, strange creatures, and alien landscape of this unique domain.

The Eternal Night

The sun never shines on the lands of the Shadow Rift. An eternal cloud of inky black vapors swirls and boils above this realm, leaving the land in a state of eternal twilight. This strengthens creatures of darkness while simultaneously smothering most light.

The illumination supplied by light sources in the Shadow Rift is halved. As such, the following adjustments should be made to the information given in **Table 63: Light Sources** from the *Player's Handbook*.

Table 4:
Light Sources in the Shadow Rift

Source	Radius
Bonfire	25 feet
Campfire	17.5 feet
Candle	2.5 feet
Lantern, Beacon	120 feet[1]
Lantern, Bullseye	30 feet
Lantern, Hooded	15 feet
Magical Weapons	2.5 feet
Spell: *Continual Light*	30 feet
Spell: *Light*	10 feet
Torch	7.5 feet

[1]This is actually a cone of light, not a radial illumination.

In addition, this effect greatly alters the distances at which movements are noticed and enemies identified. As such, the following table gives the visibility ranges for characters exploring the Shadow Rift.

Table 5:
Visibility in Shadow Rift

Current	Distance (in Feet)				
Conditions	Movement	Spot	Type	ID	Detail
Clear	50	20	10	5	3
Rain	25	10	5	2.5	1.5
Fog	12.5	5	2.5	1.25	.75

Shades and Shadows

The dark nature of the Shadow Rift infuses any creature native to the Demiplane of Shadow with vitality. Because of this, all such creatures, including the Arak, have the maximum possible number of hit points when encountered in the Shadow Rift. The following is a list of shadow-creatures found in the Shadow Rift:

- **Gloomwing, Any** (*Monstrous Manual tome*)
- **Lurker, Shadow** (*Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Two*)
- **Mastiff, Shadow** (*Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Three*)
- **Shadeling** (*Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume One*)
- **Shadow** (*Monstrous Manual tome*)
- **Shadow Asp** (*Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III*)
- **Shadow Fiend** (*Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendices I & II*)
- **Unicorn, Shadow** (*Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III*)

Spellcasting

Many magical spells, especially those employed by illusionists, make use of energy drawn from the Demiplane of Shadow. When these or other spells are employed in the Shadow Rift, their effectiveness doubles; this applies to range, area of effect, duration, damage, and the like. Casting times, the need for components, and other aspects of the magic are not affected. Powers checks are likewise unaffected.

The following is a list of spells with enhanced effects when cast in the Shadow Rift: *darkness 15' radius, demi-shadow magic, demi-shadow monsters, Lorloveim's creeping shadow, Lorloveim's shadowy transformation, major creation, minor creation, phantom steed, shades, shadowcat, shadow door, shadow engines, shadow magic, shadow monsters,* and *shadow walk.*

Conversely, spells that require or employ light in their effects are dampened in the Shadow Rift. When spells of this type are cast, their effectiveness is halved; this applies to range, damage, duration, area of effect, and the like. Casting times, components, and the need for powers checks are not affected by the Rift.

The following is a list of spells which have their power reduced in the Shadow Rift: *advanced illusion, change self, color spray, continual light* (see **Table 4**), *dancing lights, hallucinatory terrain, hypnotic pattern, illusionary wall, improved phantasmal force, light* (see **Table 4**), *mirage*

arcana, permanent illusion, phantasmal force, prismatic sphere, prismatic spray, prismatic wall, programmed illusion, project image, rainbow, rainbow pattern, screen, spectral force, starshine, sunray, vacancy, and *veil.*

Because of the diversity of spells presented throughout AD&D® game products, Dungeon Masters must use their own discretion with spells not presented on the lists above.

Travel in the Shadow Rift

The course of this adventure requires characters to do a great deal of traveling within the Shadow Rift. At the very least, they need to visit the Malachite Palace and the Obsidian Gate.

It is almost certain that the characters will want to travel incognito. This being the case, the Dungeon Master must prepare for three general conditions, each of which is described in the following text.

From a Distance

Because Arak come in a great variety of shapes and sizes, it should not be too difficult for a group of adventurers to travel across the countryside without attracting attention. Robes, cloaks, and the like allow any humanoid or demihuman (even a dwarf or gnome) to pass as an Arak.

In general, the Dungeon Master can assume that the heroes do not draw unwanted attention unless they engage in some sort of unusual activity. Unfortunately, carrying several light sources is something of an aberration in this land, for the shadow elves are creatures of darkness. Thus, any group of heroes traveling with more than a single lantern or *light* spell is viewed with suspicion.

Face to Face

In face-to-face encounters with the Arak, only elves and very similar races can pass undetected. Other races are instantly identified as outsiders unless they are somehow concealed.

If the heroes are closely examined by a muryan patrol or the like, they are instantly revealed as non-Arak. Only magical spells or excellent disguises enable them to pass undetected.

Being Spotted

After identifying the heroes as outsiders, the actions of the shadow elves depend upon the situation and their alignment. The Shadow Rift is not a place where outsiders are welcomed or even tolerated.

If the heroes encounter a patrol of muryan or any Arak aligned with the Unseelie Court, they are probably attacked at once. Only if there is obviously no way for the Arak to best the heroes do the player characters escape such an encounter unmolested. Even then, however, the shadow elves quickly sound an alarm, summoning a pack of muryan similar to the one that attacked Briggdarrow.

Arak of the Seelie Court, if they do not ignore the strangers altogether, are more likely to express curiosity than hostility, unless the heroes somehow make a nuisance of themselves. The characters might find this attention a decided bother, especially from the alven (see page 72), but it should still prove a welcome change from the harrowing encounters with dancing men and redcaps back in Tepest. The shee, the portune, and possibly the fir might actually aid those who claim to be in league with the White Lady.

Note that most shadow elves speak a number of Core languages, usually from the domains that have bordered Arak or the Shadow Rift over the centuries. Often they speak an archaic form, learned from changelings long ago—Shakespearean and Chaucerian English, if the Dungeon Master is up to it, would serve as good models.

Scene Nine: The Greenlands

Penetrating so many secrets, we cease to believe in the unknowable. But there it sits, calmly licking its chops.

—H. L. Mencken
Minority Report: H. L. Mencken's Notebooks

The first thing that the heroes need to do upon arriving in the Shadow Rift is get their bearings. If they acquired a map, either from Maeve or the hermit, show them the map on page 57. Additionally, they should be aware that the *Crown of Arak* is hidden in the Malachite Palace, "within the eternal flame." Putting these two things together, their next logical step is to cross the Greenlands.

Everything about the Greenlands is preternaturally alive. Blades of grass move in rippling waves, even when there is no wind. Tree branches dance in slow, complicated patterns, as if the trees were communicating in some intricate sign language beyond mortal ken. The wind has voices that seem to speak only in vowels, conveying nothing but seeming to be full of significance.

The Dungeon Master should create as many localized effects as he or she feels would heighten the mood of strangeness.

- The grass might cry out in pain when stepped upon, forcing heroes who must go that way to endure shrill cries with every step.
- Trees might bleed when the characters snap off branches or simply drop acorns and dead limbs on the interlopers with suspicious frequency.
- One night's campfire might be disturbed when the dead branches begin to crawl feebly out of the fire, emitting little piping sounds.
- What sounds like a great army of galloping horses might emerge in the distance and grow louder as the heroes press forward. However, if they halt and wait, the volume remains constant. The sound surrounds them and grows louder whenever they move forward, no matter which direction they go. When they resolve to continue on and face the threat, the sound becomes thunderous. Eventually, they crest a hill and look upon a river of rolling stones. There is no water, wind, or other element propelling the fist-sized rocks whatsoever; the stones themselves are the river. On the near shore, the sound is so loud that the heroes must shout to each other from a maximum distance of five feet in order to communicate verbally, yet on the far side the sound ceases abruptly and completely, though river is still there. (By moving out of sight of the river and approaching again, the sound returns.)

  This strange flow is only six to eight feet across—easy enough to leap over with a successful Strength or Dexterity check. Those who fail their rolls land on the rolling stones, which is like walking on marbles. The toppled characters' feet go out from under them, and they fall, possibly suffering minor damage (1d4 points). A successful Dexterity check on the part of either the fallen hero or someone on the riverbank is sufficient to extract the person from the rolling flow.
- At any point along the way, the heroes might hear whispering around them. Whenever they hush themselves and listen, they hear nothing, but as soon as anyone speaks they catch the sound again. Sometimes it seems there are little titters of laughter just before the heroes fall silent and try to locate the source. As they strain to hear, be prepared to describe various natural sounds around them, always concluding with, "... but no whispering." An effective roleplaying device would be to make whispery noises while the players talk, then stop suddenly when they pause to hear what you are saying. Rogues may attempt to use their hear noise ability, or spellcasters may call upon various listening spells to discern what the whispers are, but they must roll a lower initiative than you do to discern the words. Furthermore, if they call for silence before making their attempt, it fails.

  What are they hearing? Echoes of their own voices.

In short, do everything possible to throw the heroes off balance. They should never be exactly sure of how things stand. A single episode of food suddenly coming alive while being swallowed and trying desperately to fight its way back up their throats should shock even the most battle-hardened warrior. None of these events should prove a danger in the physical sense, merely heighten the strangeness and eeriness of this land.

The number of encounters that the heroes have during their travels is up to the Dungeon Master. A few are detailed below; a Dungeon Master who wishes to add more can consult **Table 6** (page 75). As is always the case in a RAVENLOFT adventure, however, the Dungeon Master should make sure that the use of random encounters does not break the mood or detract from the story at the heart of the adventure.

The North Ford

This encounter occurs when the heroes reach the bridge that crosses over the Falling River at the North Ford, where they meet a group of brag. This encounter begins with the Dungeon Master reading the following narrative to the players:

From somewhere in the darkness ahead, you hear the musical sound of fast-moving water dancing over stones. Not long after, the fresh, cool smell of a rolling stream washes over you, and the air begins to carry drifting particles of spray.

In short order, you come into sight of a stout stone bridge stretching across a wide, churning expanse of water. Coils of ivylike plants with large bulbs entwine the supports of the bridge. These beautiful flowers glow a delicate green, throwing a steady radiance upon the scene and giving the entire area a most entrancing, though eerie, appearance.

Over the loudly rushing water you hear the sounds of hammering. From even further off, strains of a lilting, cheerful tune also reach your ears.

This place is more or less exactly as described. No great danger awaits them, but the heroes have an opportunity to encounter the shadow elves working here.

The Brag

Beneath the bridge, hidden from the view of the adventurers as they approach, are a half-dozen brag hard at work repairing some damage to the bridge.

If the heroes investigate the bridge, the Dungeon Master should read the following text:

Under the bridge you see several short, stout figures repairing the supports. The albino-white skin of these small engineers deeply contrasts their deep black eyes and hair. Long ponytails hang down their backs, swishing behind them like tails as they work.

Though you cannot understand their strange speech—a combination of nickering and snorting—it is obvious from their pointing and shouting that they are extremely frustrated with the stonework before them.

The brag are neutral and have no real interest in the heroes, either in helping or hindering their mission. In addition, communicating with the brag is not easy, since the only Core language that these particular Arak speak is Balok. If attacked or otherwise harassed, the brag transform into ponies and race away into the darkness. As soon as they can thereafter, the brag alert the muryan that intruders have entered the land. If this happens, the heroes are soon attacked by a group of Dancing Men.

If the party takes an obvious interest in the work that the brag are doing, however, the Arak attempt to indicate by sign language that they need someone of human height to hold the new keystone in pace while they shore up the braces. The Dungeon Master can either allow Intelligence checks for the heroes to understand their gestures or simply play out the scene charade style and let the players make their best guesses.

Characters who aid the brag should make Strength checks; success indicates that they are able to keep the keystone from shifting long enough for the brag to complete their work. Characters with stoneworking skills may work alongside the brag. However, if more than half the heroes fail their rolls or if the player characters simply ignore the brag and attempt to walk across the bridge, it collapses. The collapse is slow, allowing the heroes time to get across before the stones tumble into the rushing water, whereupon they see the irritated brag emerge and shake their fists angrily at the characters before turning into ponies and galloping off in a huff. The Arak then report the trespassers to the nearest muryan patrol, as described above.

Should all go well, the brag are pleased with their new friends and reward them with a keg of brag-ale, a potent brew of exceptional excellence. Note that this is faerie drink and as such has the same effects as those described in the Glossary. Characters who actually used stoneworking, architectural, or engineering skills to help them receive a brag's blessing (a permanent +1 bonus to the relevant proficiency check). In either case, word of the heroes' deed spreads quickly among the brag. From that point on, any brag they encounter treat them as friends.

Characters who investigate the strange plant that illuminates the bridge find it has a number of glowing pumpkinlike gourds. Eating the flesh of one of these gourds permanently grants a character infravision (doubling the range of characters who already had infravision) but turns his or her flesh pale green. The character must also make a saving throw vs. spell; failure indicates that at times of stress he or she will begin to glow slightly, exactly as if under the effects of a *faerie fire* (+2 to opponents' attack rolls).

Once they part from the brag, the heroes are free to continue on their way.

Arak, Brag (6): AC 4; MV 12 (2-legged) or 18 (4-legged); HD 4; hp 32 each; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1 (fists or hooves); SA spells, sleep, delusion; SD +2 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, cold, and ice magic; SW leather, sunlight; MR 30%; SZ S (3′ tall); ML average (10); Int high (13); AL LN; XP 3,000 each.

Notes: *Sleep*—Anyone meeting the gaze of a brag's piercing black eyes must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *sleep* spell. *Delusion*—Anyone struck in melee by a brag's fist or hoof must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the delusion that he or she is a horse (the hero walks on all fours and makes all attacks with his or her "hooves"); the character is allowed a new saving throw each day at a cumulative –1 penalty.

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*alarm, cantrip, protection from evil, protection from good*; 2nd—*protection from cantrip* (×2); 3rd—*protection from normal missiles.*

The Flower Fields

This encounter can occur at any point, just as the heroes are emerging from a stand of trees or forest.

As you step from the trees, you see a rolling landscape stretching for miles, every inch of it covered with flowers of all types. Their delicate perfumes reach your nose. Bees and butterflies are busy among the blossoms—and some of the butterflies are a full foot across!

These fields are a favorite haunt of the alven; a number of the butterflies present are in fact alven in their insect forms. Curious and fearless, they light upon the characters and begin discussing them in the third person as if the heroes were not present. ("What do you think they are?" "I've never seen any changelings quite like them.") Should the characters interrupt, the alven are delighted. ("It speaks!" "Nay, 'twas merely parrot-talk. I've heard some of them are clever enough to mimic it.") Collectively, this group of alven speak all of the languages from the Core domains of Ravenloft (and many more besides). Remember that the heroes will only be able to understand about every other response (unless they have great linguistic gifts or are under the effects of a *tongues* spell). The alven are friendly, if flighty, but keep reverting to referring to the heroes as "it" and discussing these amusing strangers among themselves.

The alven have a special fondness for anyone who can carry on a decent conversation about gardens and plants. This might be a druid, wood elf, or someone with proficiencies in that area. If the heroes do something extraordinary to win the favor of the alven, they are rewarded with either a tiny dram of honey or nugget of pollen (Dungeon Master's choice) which acts as a full jar of *Keoghtom's ointment.*

The alven are nonaggressive; if attacked they simply fly off. While somewhat frivolous, they are unswervingly loyal to Maeve. If the heroes mention her name or show her ring, they instantly catch the alven's attention. These Arak are very interested in the welfare of their queen and will gladly give the heroes directions. However, they fear the Obsidian Gate and dislike the Malachite Palace ("It's so *dull!*"), so they will not accompany the heroes to either location. Their directions will be highly accurate but almost impossible to follow, as the alven steer their somewhat erratic courses by scent. ("Fly eckwards til you first sniff Logan's oak, then bear andwards to just before you whiff the willows, ride the thermals up, and then go windwards to the clover . . . ")

Arak, Alven (20): AC 2; MV 3, fly 15 (A); HD 1; hp 2 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 point; SA spells, wing dance; SD +3 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to stone weapons, electricity, and lightning; SW cold-wrought iron, sunlight; MR 85%; SZ T (1′ tall); ML unsteady (5); Int high (14); AL CG; XP 1,400 each.

Notes: *Wing Dance*—When threatened, alven take butterfly form and execute a complicated interlacing aerial "dance" that forces all watchers to make two saving throws vs. spell. Failure of the first leaves the viewer *enthralled*, as per the spell; failure of the second results in both deafness and blindness.

Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*entangle* (×3); 2nd—*goodberry, trip, warp wood*; 3rd—*plant growth.*

The Hungry Grass

The flowers give way at last to a sea of grass. Very odd grass, you realize, looking more closely. The green plain stretches for as far as the eye can see, yet every individual blade of grass stands clearly defined, a precise image. It looks too real—rather than blurring in the distance, they remain tiny but vivid all the way to the horizon.

The characters may suspect that the grass is some sort of illusion, but all attempts to "see through it" will produce no results; the grass looks just the same however it is viewed. Wary heroes may decide to go around, rather than over, this uncanny vegetation—a time-consuming but eventless detour. Dungeon Masters who wish their players to have to deal with the grass should therefore place this encounter at a point in the adventure when any delay is risky to the heroes.

At first, contact with the grass has no ill effects. However, after one hour the grass begins to affect characters in a peculiar way so that it becomes slightly more tangible than they are, causing them to suffer 1 point of damage per turn from tiny cuts. Simply standing perfectly still is not an answer, as characters will occasionally fidget and be forced to shift their stance. Heroes who do not like this turn of events and decide to make a run for it at the end of the first hour should be able to make it all the way across to safety, provided they make successful Wisdom checks to remember to pace themselves. Those who fail run until exhausted (a number of rounds equal to the character's Constitution score) must stop and rest for two turns (twenty minutes) before being able to go on. Note that *levitation*, *flying*, a *potion of gaseous form*, and any of a number of other means can get the characters safely across. The alven will not think to warn the heroes against the hungry grass, as they simply fly over it, and all Arak are immune to its effects in any case, but any other nonmalicious shadow elves they encounter before reaching it may tell them to steer clear.

When Is a Turtle Not a Turtle?

Having escaped from the hungry grass, you throw yourselves gratefully to the ground, only to bruise yourself on a mossy rock half-hidden in the fallen leaves. Giving it an angry kick, you are startled when it responds with an "ow!" A small head, arms, legs, and tail poke out from beneath the stone—or shell, as you now realize it must be—and the turtle looks up at you reproachfully. That's when you notice the spectacles on the end of its nose.

The proper thing for a hero to do at this point, of course, is to apologize. If no apology is forthcoming for the hero's unintended slight, the turtle scuttles off at a surprising pace and is soon lost from sight. If attacked, it withdraws back into its shell and refuses to come out whatever they do. If, on the other hand, the offending hero does apologize, the turtle suddenly stands up on two legs and bows (almost falling over in the process). It then whispers, "Apology accepted," and introduces itself as "Cradoc, a portune of high attainments and unimpeachable reputation." If the characters are injured, Cradoc removes some blackened moss from a spot on his shell and proceeds to cleanse the wounds with it, literally wiping them away. The portune asks in return for the opportunity to give at least one character a physical examination—it has been centuries since he has seen a mortal, and he is curious about human physiology. Should the heroes be of more than one race (human, dwarf, elf, halfling, etc.) and both sexes, he will ask to examine one of each, marveling aloud at their odd biology all the while and asking questions that are alternately shrewd and naive.

If asked about his "high attainments," Cradoc explains that he is cataloguing all the mosses of the Shadow Rift ("including lichen"), having already studied ferns, fungi, and water-plants. He can describe any spot within the domain in painstaking detail (from a turtle's-eye view, of course), including the marshes and swamps of the south ("an unwholesome region filled with interesting hanging mosses").

Arak, Portune (1): AC –2; MV 3; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 + special (bite); SA spells, fumble; SD +3 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, heat, and fire (including magical fires); SW copper, sunlight; MR 45%; SZ T (6″ long); ML unreliable (3); Int genius (18); AL LG; XP 3,000.

Notes: *Fumble*—Anyone attacking a portune must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fumble* spell. *Sleep*—Anyone bitten by a portune must successfully save vs. spell or fall into a deep sleep from which he or she will not awaken for 1d8 days. *Mortifying wound*—The bite of a portune does not heal, even with application of spells like *heal* and *heroes' feast*; only a *wish* can close the wound.

Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*cure light wounds* (×3); 2nd—*aid*, *slow poison*, *speed poison*; 3rd—*cure disease*.

The Midnight Garden

Eventually, the heroes come across a cobbled road cutting across their path, stretching out of sight in either direction. Should they decide to follow it, after an hour or so it begins to pass through a formal garden filled with topiary, what look to be hedge-mazes, and neatly set-out beds of flowers. All the hedges, shrubbery, and flowers are black—

some glossy black, others dull black, but all of some sable shade. Some of the hedges have vines with glowing flowers that look like twinkling stars against the black background. Other flowers chime like delicate bells, filling the air with soft music after each puff of wind.

It takes over an hour for the party to traverse this garden. If they stay on the road for this entire time, they encounter no difficulties, but as soon as any member of the party, even an animal companion, takes a single step off of the cobblestone highway, they attract the wrath of the place's guardians:

The instant that your foot steps off of the cobblestone road, a strange thing happens: All of the glowing flowers are instantly doused, turning the garden into a vast expanse of absolute darkness. At the same time, the tinkling of bells vanishes from the air, and the field becomes deathly quiet.

After a few seconds of silence, the heavy beating of drums fills the air, but these are not the distant sounds of far off tribes. Rather, they are so near that you can feel their vibrations rolling across your skin.

Just then, something begins to move in the darkness of the garden.

The characters have attracted the attention of a lashweed patch, deadly hunting plants scattered throughout the garden. Eight of these horrible, hunting vines completely surround the party and attack from all sides. A complete description of lashweed appears in the *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III.*

Lashweed (8): AC 7; MV 9 (unaffected by vegetation or foliage); HD 4; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4 (barbed tendrils); SA surprise, poison, entangle; MR 20%; SZ M (5′ tall); ML fearless (20); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 270.

Notes: *Surprise*—Lashweed impose a -2 penalty on their prey's surprise roll. *Poison*—Once during this encounter, each lashweed may spit a cone of poison 10 feet long with a 6′ base. Anyone in this cone must successfully save vs. poison or be blinded for 1d4 days. *Entangle*—Each plant can cast an *entangle* spell three times per day.

Personality: Predatory and determined.

The booming sound that the heroes hear is a kind of echo location system employed by the lashweed. They combine this ability with a sensitivity for vibrations traveling through the ground when hunting their prey. This more than makes up for the fact that they are blind and have no sense of smell. If some means can be found to deceive these location abilities, the lashweed plants halt, convinced that no prey remains in the area.

Battling the Lashweed

If the heroes remain on the road while fighting the lashweed, then the encounter results in a relatively normal battle. The predatory plants rise up out of the garden in a ring around the heroes and advance upon them from all sides. It is possible that their sudden appearance surprises the party.

Any hero who steps off of the road, including the one who triggered this encounter, is affected by the *entangle* ability of the lashweed. As each plant can invoke this power thrice per day, it should be almost impossible for the heroes to avoid it.

After the Battle

Once the lashweed problem has been dealt with, the heroes are free to move on or investigate the garden. Should they once again leave the road within the garden, they are attacked by another patch of the deadly plants. If they opt to stay where they are and look around, another group of lashweed plants arrives in 1d6 turns. Apart from that, they find nothing of value or interest (except, perhaps, to a botanist) in the garden.

Additional Encounters

The following table presents a very brief list of possible random encounters. They are minimally detailed and, as such, require a fair bit of development on the part of the Dungeon Master before being introduced into the game. Dungeon Masters who wish to insert these meetings into their campaign may do so by either rolling randomly on **Table 6** or selecting the result that seems best suited to the mood of the game.

Ever Onward

The characters may wish to wander about the Shadow Rift for some time, exploring its wonders. Eventually, however, they should make their way to the Malachite Palace, whereupon the adventure continues with "Scene Ten." Do not force them into this if they are enjoying exploring the shadow-realm: Loht's plan may be nearing fruition, but that is from the point of view of an immortal who has already lived over fifty centuries. A few more days won't matter much, although if the heroes delay too long, Loht may become aware of them and send his Unseelie minions to harass them in ever-increasing numbers.

Table 6:
Encounters in the Greenlands

Roll 1d6	Encounter
1	*Travelers*—The heroes come upon a mixed party of shadow elves making a pilgrimage from one of the three cities in the north to Arak's Tomb. The purpose of their journey is to hold a ceremony honoring the memory of the hero who gave his life so that the shadow elves might escape the tyranny of Gwydion. This represents a good opportunity for the DM to let the heroes meet one or two of the shadow-elf races they have not yet encountered.
2	*Will-o'-Wisp*—The heroes are stalked by a wily pair of will-o'-wisps who attempt to lure them off the path and lose them in an unnaturally thick (perhaps even magical) forest. Once the heroes are totally confused, the radiant creatures attack and attempt to destroy them.
3	*Grim*—The heroes come across the crumbling shell of a ruined building. This was once the stone cottage of a mortal who befriended the shee and settled in Arak in order to be near them. The sage himself is long since dead and his house little more than a roofless hollow, yet the site is protected by a grim (see Appendix Four). This grim is stuck in the form of a great black dog. The characters may stay here as long as they like, secure from attacks by Unseelie fey. **Grim (1)**: AC 0; MV 18; HD 4+3; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8 (bite); SA howl, surprise (1 in 10 chance for opponents to detect), turn undead; SD never surprised, +1 or better magical weapon to hit, *protection from evil* aura (10' radius), *detects evil* within 70 feet; SW bound to site; MR 25%; SZ M (2' tall at shoulder); ML fearless (20); Int avg (9); AL NG; XP 975. *Notes: Howl*—Evil creatures hearing a grim's yowl must check morale each round or flee. *Turning Undead*—grim turn undead as 9th level clerics and can also turn evil extraplanar creatures, gaining a +2 on the die roll.
4	*Cath Shee*—The characters encounter one of these great cats (as described in the *Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Two*). This is a good-aligned creature and companion of Maeve's who knows of the heroes' mission in the Shadow Rift and does what it can to aid them.
5	*Unchopping the Tree*—The characters come across a woodsman who is painstakingly raising a fallen tree back into its original upright position and then reassembling all the wood chips to fill the gap made by the axe. This is a cursed changeling who felled a tree beloved by the alven, who cursed him to restore fallen trees until he has re-erected one for every one he chopped down in his lifetime. He has been at it for centuries and still has centuries more to go before fulfilling his doom. He is stoic and silent but not unfriendly.
6	*Le Belle Dame Sans Merci*—The heroes come upon an enchanting shee who has been toying with the idea of relieving her ennui by taking a mortal lover. She fixes upon one of the heroes as a likely candidate. A character who accepts her overtures must first prove his devotion by completing some difficult task (their present quest would qualify nicely). Thereafter he will be compelled to return to her embraces. She will eventually tire of him, but he will not return to the mortal world until at least a century has passed, effectively retiring the character from the campaign for the duration. **Arak, Shee (1)**: AC 6; MV 15; HD 7; hp 22; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (elven bow); SA spells, charm, fumble; SD +1 or better magical weapons to hit, immune to stone weapons, fire, and heat-based attacks; SW lead, sunlight; MR 15%; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (12); Int exceptional (16); AL N; XP 5,000. *Notes: Charm*—The kiss of a shee requires recipient to successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a permanent *charm person* spell. *Fumble*—Anyone who directs a melee or missile attack at a shee must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fumble* spell. *Spells (4/3/2/1)*: 1st—*charm person, friends, hypnotism, sleep*; 2nd—*bind, forget, scare*; 3rd—*hold person, suggestion*; 4th—*emotion*. *Personality*: Seductive but easily bored.

Scene Ten: The Malachite Palace

All's well that ends well: still the fine's the crown;
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown,
—William Shakespeare
All's Well That Ends Well

The Malachite Palace has been the traditional seat of the Arak lords since soon after the shadow elves arrived in the Demiplane of Dread. Both Maeve and Loht hold court here over their respective subjects from this unusual building.

The Malachite Palace is a magnificently beautiful structure with delicate carvings, grand pillars, and regal furnishings. However, as the endless centuries have passed the shadow elves have become fascinated with decay and the erosion of time on all material things. The castle now subtly reflects this preoccupation, as its immortal stonecarvers are deliberately shaping stone to look as if it were already eroded by centuries of rain, wind, and weather. The result is an eerie but beautiful building where the timeless and the dying are locked together in intimate embrace.

Getting Close

The Malachite Palace is not a "castle" in the traditional sense. It has neither a curtain wall surrounding it nor a massive gatehouse. Significantly, no guards even patrol its perimeter. This does not mean, however, that outsiders can easily slip inside.

First Impressions

The Malachite Palace becomes visible to the characters while still some distance away. Even though the darkness of the Shadow Rift attempts to keep all things hidden, a great plume of fire makes this structure hard to miss. Read the following narrative to the players shortly after the heroes cross the bridge at the South Ford:

In the distance, you begin to see a warm, rippling glow. As you move nearer to it, a most wondrous structure reveals itself. The source of the light is a pillar of orange flame rising up out of a great, square tower. Out of the corners of the structure, four spires jut skyward, throwing out long shadows to merge with the darkness.

The Last Mile

This place is the heart of the Arak realm. As such, it is difficult for mortals to approach. Any mortal who comes within one mile of the palace begins to feel distinctly uneasy. To simulate this self-consciousness, tell the player characters that as soon as they catch sight of the structure in the distance they feel they are being watched from afar and that not even their least movement goes unnoticed.

Fear and Loathing

When the heroes come within one thousand yards of the palace, their uneasiness grows even greater. When the characters arrive at this point, the Dungeon Master can read the following text aloud to the players:

As you move closer to the Malachite Palace, you become more and more uncomfortable. Looking up at its magnificent facade, you are shocked by the sudden conviction that it's looking back at you. With every step you take, the feeling grows that this building is aware of you in a way that stone piled upon stone should not be. Stepping inside will be like walking through the mouth of some great patient beast and praying that it decides not to swallow.

At this point any character who attempts to advance further must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation. Anyone who fails is so overcome with fear that he or she suffers a –1 penalty on all attack rolls and ability checks while within sight of the palace. All the characters who fail this fear check also experience the following hallucination:

What was that? You're certain you saw movement out of the corner of your eye. When you look directly at it, all is still, but things seem to move and shift in the periphery, along the edges of your vision. Slow, methodical movements like those of a great carved beast, crouching like a predator ready to spring, waiting ever so patiently for your approach.

Getting Inside

The heroes have a number of options available to them for entering the castle.

The Front Door

The easiest way to enter or leave the palace is to ascend the steps and open the front door. These are magically sealed, however, and difficult to get by without the use of a spell. Exact information on this matter is presented in the description of area 1 in "The Map Key" section.

The Windows

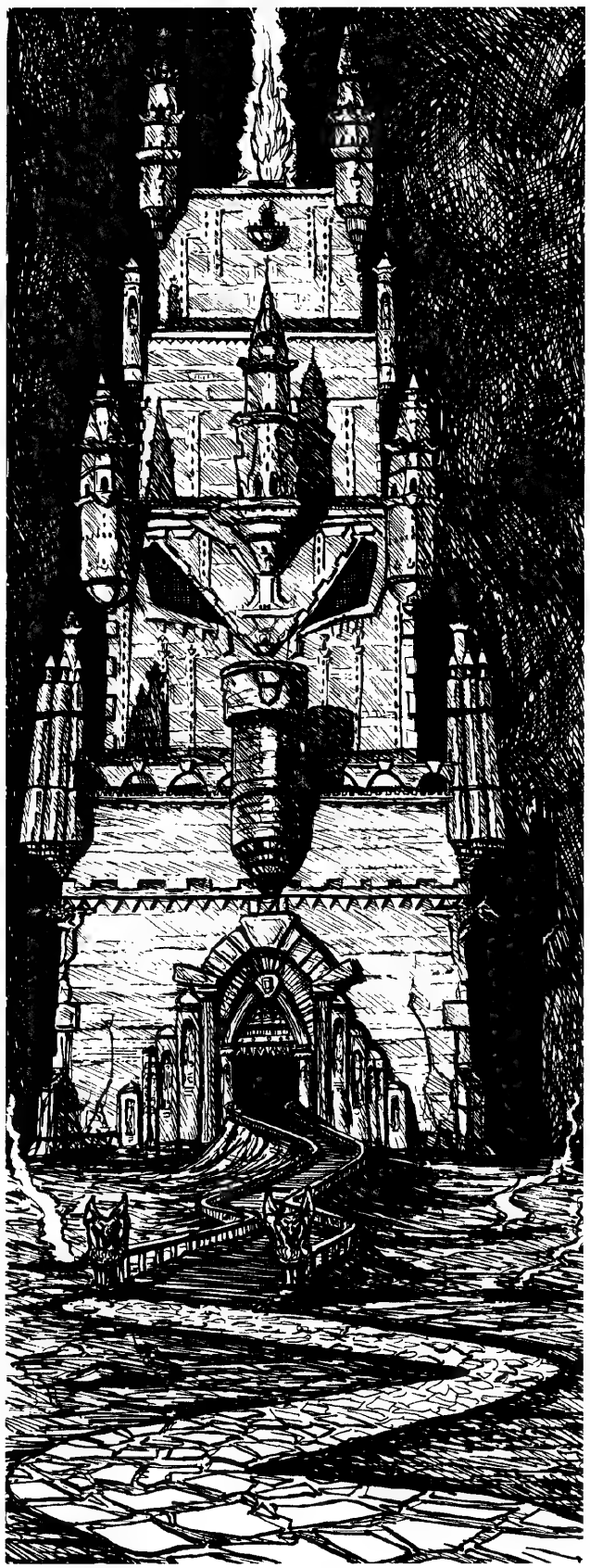
While the ground floor of the palace has no windows, skilled climbers can easily enter those on the higher floors. Reaching these portals is easier for some characters than others. The carvings that cover the huge structure make great hand- and footholds. In general, a thief's chances to scale these walls suffer a –20% penalty. The sharp points jutting from the stone also inflict an extra 1d4 points of damage to falling characters.

Magical Spells

Spells like *passwall* or *phase door* can help the characters gain admittance to the Malachite Palace. Apart from the normal effects of the Demiplane and (in some cases) the Shadow Rift on these efforts, these abilities should function normally.

Dilly-Dallying

If the heroes linger too long near the palace before entering, they catch the attention of the muryan who patrol within. These muryan warriors immediately raise the alarm and attack the heroes. Once the alarm is raised, Mohrg is immediately informed of their presence. From this point on, he orders his warriors to fall back and allow the heroes to pass unmolested whenever possible, putting up a show of resistance to keep the heroes from becoming suspicious. From this point onward, several sith shadow the heroes (literally!),



observing their movements to discover their purpose in coming here.

Arak, Muryan: AC 2; MV 15; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA spells, dance, slow, deafness, blindness; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, lightning, and electricity; SW mithral, sunlight; MR 15%; SZ M (5′ tall); ML fanatic (17); Int high (13); AL CN; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Dance*—Anyone struck by the muryan in melee must successfully save vs. spell or begin to dance (–4 penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class). *Slow*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or be *slowed* for the duration of the combat. *Deafness*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *deafness* spell. *Blindness*—Anyone struck by a muryan in melee must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *blindness* spell.

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*fire burst, magic missile* (×2), *shield*; 2nd—*flaming sphere, stinking cloud*; 3rd—*fireball.*

Exploring the Palace

The majority of this scene should be made up of the party's efforts to search the Malachite Palace for the *Crown of Arak.* The patrols within the palace give the heroes a wide berth whenever possible, waiting patiently for them to lead Mohrg to the artifact.

Though the palace is a structure of great beauty, it is an eerie beauty that no mortal can feel at ease around. Even the most stalwart and unimaginative hero should find the Malachite Palace disturbing: Doors seemingly open and close on their own; torches flare to life and extinguish themselves at random; and shadows move independently of their owners (*if* they have shadows, that is). The Dungeon Master should use these effects in his or her descriptions to convey a mood of unease. Even more unsettling should be the heroes' conviction that the building is sentient and aware of their presence—if the Dungeon Master does his or her job well, the player characters should be in such a state that they hesitate to pass through every doorway, lest it suddenly crush them like a stony jaw, and feel that the floor may suddenly give way beneath their feet at every step. Another disturbing element is the quiet emptiness of the palace, like a vast, old museum after hours. Either the place is largely deserted or the inhabitants are all hiding—the heroes should wonder which is the case throughout their visit.

The *Crown of Arak*

The heroes were told by Maeve that she hid the *Crown of Arak* in something called "the eternal fire." Even a casual glance at the map of the Malachite Palace reveals that this must refer to the giant plume of flame that burns atop the building. What most heroes do not realize at this point, however, is that they have to either descend into this blazing inferno or discover another way to bring the crown out of it.

Meeting Loht

Quite simply, the heroes will not meet Loht in the palace. Although the Malachite Palace is his home, the Prince of the Sith is not here at the moment. Not long ago, the voice that constantly whispers to him told him that the recovery of the crown was imminent. Believing that this was true (it is, but only on an Arak time-scale), he traveled to the Darkenheights. In his absence, Loht has left the palace in the care of Mohrg, Prince of the Muryan.

Meeting Mohrg

By the end of this scene, even the most cautious of heroes have probably drawn attention to themselves. Even if they have not managed to set off an alarm, the Dungeon Master should assume that the sith notes their presence after several rooms have been explored.

Ordinarily, the sith's response to a group of intruders would be either to attack at once or else have Mohrg loose his Dancing Men and pick up the pieces afterward. They know, of course, of the importance of recovering the *Crown of Arak* and believe that the heroes may lead them to it. After all, strangers do not come into the Shadow Rift often, and these ones do appear to have a purpose. Therefore the sith watch them in shadow form and try to figure out what they want in the Malachite Palace. For his part, Mohrg keeps a number of his warriors out of sight until the player characters appear to have reached their goal. In all likelihood, this happens when the heroes are on the roof of the palace, in the section entitled "Retrieving the Crown," later in this scene.

The Corpse Candle

When the heroes were in Briggdarrow, they had the chance of encountering a corpse candle. If this did indeed happen, then one of the heroes has likely been haunted by images of a murdering muryan ever since. During this part of the adventure, that hero has a chance to free himself or herself from the spectral burden by avenging the man's death. The killer he or she saw in the dead man's eyes was none other than Mohrg, Prince of the Muryan.

A Cry of Alarm

If the heroes are not careful during their exploration of the palace, they draw the attention of Loht's minions. Exactly how they might do this varies. Probable causes include making an exceptional amount of noise, allowing someone to escape who has seen them, or otherwise being careless in their exploration of the palace.

If an alarm sounds, the heroes have 1d4 turns before they are attacked. If all the heroes evaded earlier capture by the muryan, goblins, or powrie, their attackers now are six muryankin—certainly not an overwhelming force, and one the heroes should be able to defeat without too much effort. If the DM wishes to make this encounter more horrific, have these muryankin be the changelings created from the townsfolk of Briggdarrow and thus recognizable to anyone who thoroughly explored that town and met any of its people in Scene One.

However, if any of the player characters succumbed to the faerie cake, their attackers now are their own changeling selves! The Dungeon Master should decide which type of changeling each hero would make (sheekin, alvenkin, muryankin, etc.) and create the stats for these most personal of opponents. If and when the heroes successfully defeat a changeling counterpart, it dissolves screaming into a shadow, which subsequently attempts to embrace the character from which it was taken, as if it would attack, but then reattaches itself to him or her, restoring the character to normal.

As discussed above, the Unseelie Arak are waiting to see what happens. They have a good idea of why these heroes have come to the palace and are willing to lie in wait until these outsiders have recovered the *Crown of Arak*. Still, they do not want the heroes to become suspicious, so Mohrg's warriors must make at least a few short appearances.

The Map Key

The following room descriptions detail the encounters in various areas of the Malachite Palace. Each of these descriptions begins with a short narrative that should be read to the players when they first enter (or otherwise examine) an area.

1. Front Door

Before you stands the oaken door which leads into the great Malachite Palace of the Arak. A warm light rains down upon you from the column of fire that streams into the night atop this dark fortress, the first true light you've seen in this shadowy land.

To either side of you is an ornate, caryatid column depicting a lithe fey woman with an equally slender sword raised above her head. The swords are wreathed in flames which rise in a curving arch to frame the massive portals.

Curiously, neither of the beautifully carved doors has any sort of latch or knocker.

The front door is the most obvious means of entering the Malachite Palace but one the heroes will probably be reluctant to attempt. After all, simply walking up to the front door of a domain lord's house is not an activity which generally rewards the trespasser, and the heroes may well believe that Loht is the true ruler of this realm. (In fact he's merely acting unwittingly as Gwydion's proxy.)

The Doors: The doors which lead into the palace are very solid. Under normal circumstances, nothing short of a battering ram could budge them. In addition to this, the doors are magically held with a *wizard lock* spell. They swing open automatically for those who speak the words "I honor the memory of Arak the Erlking" (in any language), with the caryatids echoing the phrase. Others have to try more forceful means of getting into the palace.

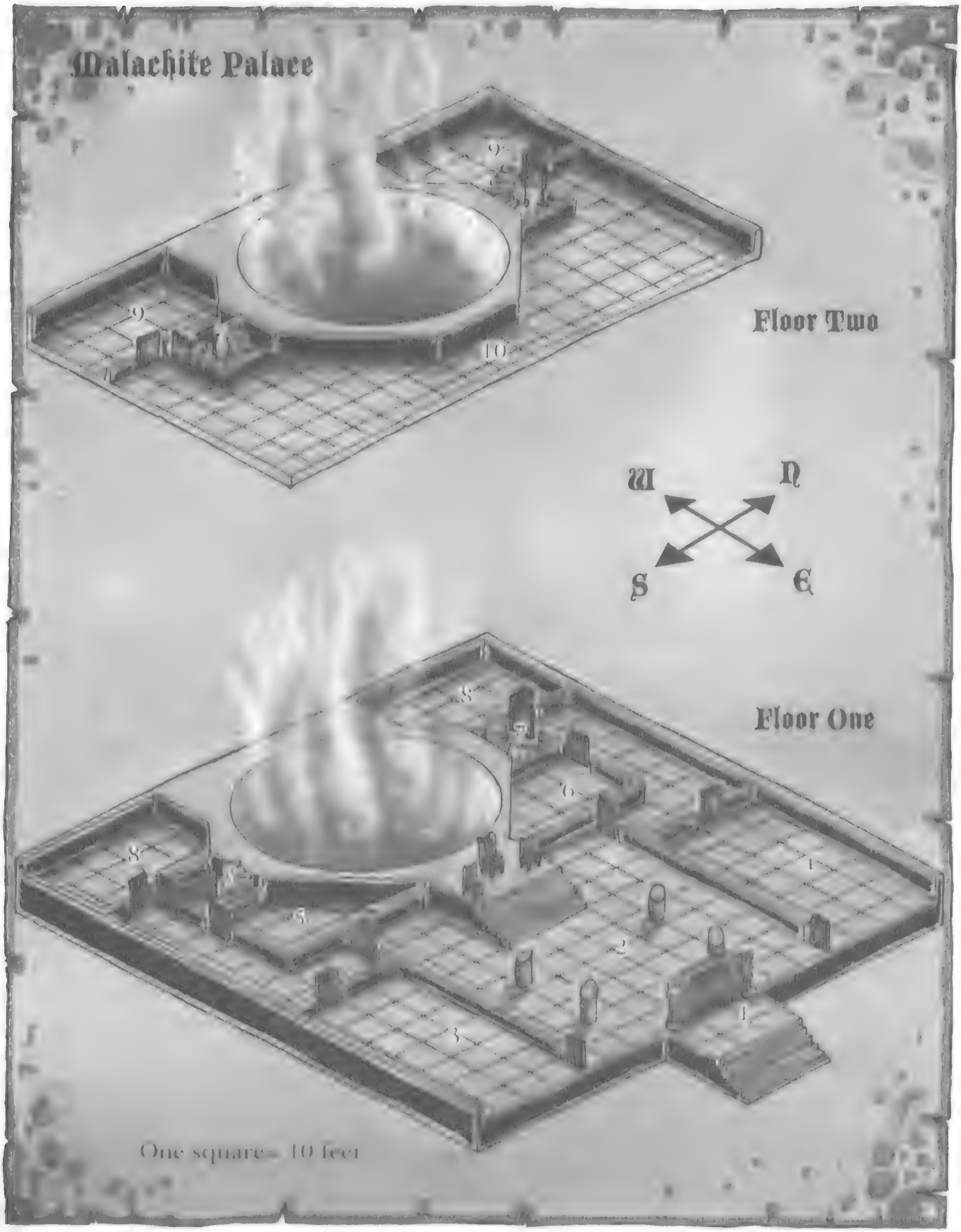
A *knock* spell opens the door just as if one had spoken the key phrase, complete with the caryatids' responses. If a *dispel magic* or similar spell is invoked, the magic holding the doors is assumed to have been cast by a 12th-level wizard. Neither of these actions sets off an alarm or otherwise alerts those within that something is amiss.

Breaking down the door is very difficult (not to mention heart-rending to anyone who admires fine craftsmanship), generally requiring the use of the siege damage rules. In such cases, the doors are treated as a thin wooden wall. As one might expect, breaking down the doors immediately draws the attention of Mohrg and his warriors.

Magical means of getting past the door, such as a *passwall* or *wraithform* spell, function normally. In addition, these methods do not raise an alarm or otherwise attract attention to the party. From the inside, anyone can grasp the hand ring on the door and pull it open.

2. Throne Room

This vast chamber is brightly lit by a great column of flame that burns behind the gleaming crystal which forms its easternmost wall. The ruddy glow of this magnificent blaze


Malachite Palace
Floor Two
W
N
S
E
Floor One
One square = 10 feet

is shattered into myriad colors by four rough-hewn crystal pillars that rise to the ceiling some eighty or more feet overhead.

Just in front of the crimson pyre are two thrones which throw long, dancing shadows across the rest of the hall. More ornate furnishings would be difficult to imagine. The throne on the right is a wonder of delicate, gilded woodwork with plush cushions of black velvet. The left throne is larger and more solid but of equally subtle craftsmanship; its ebon wood looks as if it were cut from the very stuff of darkness itself.

This is Loht and Maeve's throne room, the heart of power in the Shadow Rift. Assuming that no alarm has been raised, this room in uninhabited. This does not, however, mean that the heroes are safe here.

The Gilded Throne: This is Maeve's seat. Despite their differences, Maeve and Loht managed to rule jointly over their several subjects until relatively recently. Since matters became more stained between them they began to hold court at separate times, alternating in their use of this chamber.

Since the throne was made for Maeve, it is perilous for any other to sit upon it. Anyone who dares to do so must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or freeze in place. Such a character is utterly unable to move until a *dispel magic* or similar power restores the use of his or her muscles; otherwise the effect is permanent.

Anyone found on either throne by the Arak is considered guilty of treason, which is punishable by either exile (if the offender were Arak) or being weighed down with stones and sunk in the Biting Tarn (for trespassers of any other race, including changelings). Presumably, however, no hero will be left behind like this by his or her companions. Characters paralyzed by this throne may be carried around or otherwise moved about by their companions, but they are of no help until their paralysis is cured.

The Midnight Throne: Loht considers the act of touching his throne, let alone sitting on it, treason. In this case, however, no executioners are needed, for the throne is laced with deadly magic of its own.

Any hero who approaches the throne feels an *intensely* malevolent aura surrounding it, giving him or her a cold, queasy feeling in the stomach. One who touches the throne must attempt a saving throw vs. death magic. A successful save indicates that a powerful magical assault sends the character hurling away from the throne. The effect of this mystical surge drains the character of life energy, reducing his or her level by one just as if the hero had been attacked by a wraith. A failed saving throw results in the immediate death of the character. However, this is not the end of the matter. The spirit of a mortal who dies in this fashion is torn from his or her body to become a gossamer (a type of saugh or restless dead, described in Appendix Four of this book). Anyone who witnesses this agonizing death must make a horror check as they see their companion's essence torn from his or her body.

A gossamer created in this fashion may or may not attack its former companions, as the Dungeon Master desires. If the rules for undead player characters presented in the *Requiem* boxed set are being used in the campaign, the gossamer may be run as a player character. Otherwise it immediately flies south and joins Loht's undead army, where the heroes may later encounter it.

3. Gallery of Orbs

The walls of this room are a polished, gleaming black, set with tiny flecks of glowing crystal. These multicolored pinpoints make it look as if you are surrounded by an empty void filled with prismatic stars. Scattered around the room, literally floating in this sea of darkness, are countless spheres of faintly luminescent glass.

In this room are displayed an assortment of orb-sculptures, an art form unique to the shadow elves. To elves and other sylvan folk, these orbs are delightful and wondrous items. Non-elves, however, find them dangerous in the extreme.

Anyone who looks upon these spheres sees only a dim, shimmering radiance. Although they float and bob with tiny changes in the air currents, each sphere remains more or less in one place. All in all, they look to the naked eye like will-o'-wisps gathered around a marsh.

These pieces were meant to be appreciated through touch. Anyone who places his or her exposed skin against one of the orbs experiences a tingling sensation. If he or she does not pull away at once, the full force of the sculpture floods his or her mind.

For shadow elves, this means a pleasant tour of the feelings and emotions of the artist that helps them lift the burden of ennui. Each work focuses on a particular emotional experience. Some examples of the works in this gallery include the pride and wonder of holding a newborn baby, the passion of embracing a lover, the glorious languor of listening to a stream.

Other, less pleasant emotions trapped in the orbs manifest themselves as overwhelming waves of grief, remorse, or heartbreak. These intense emotions last for several hours after the orb is touched and only fade slowly, so it may be some time before the observer is fully free of the artist's influence.

Non-elves have a somewhat more dramatic experience. After the momentary tingle, they are bombarded with an overwhelming intensity of emotion unlike anything they have ever felt before. The observer must immediately make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis to avoid terrible and long-lasting effects. If the check fails, the emotion becomes permanent. The observer is unable to concentrate on anything but the inner emotion. *Dispel magic* or *remove curse* palliates the condition somewhat, allowing the character to function normally again, but the emotion is only pushed under the surface, not abolished, permanently altering his or her personality.

Psionicists can protect themselves from this attack somewhat, making the aforementioned saving throw with a +4 bonus. Characters with wild psionic talents also have an innate natural resistance, resulting in a +2 bonus to their saving throws.

4. North Gallery

You have entered an long hall with walls of polished black stone. Two parallel rows of white marble statues and figurines stand in the center of the room. Each is a masterpiece which looks as if it might come to life at any moment.

The walls of this gallery are hung with a number of portraits. At first, the paintings appear to be lit in some unusual fashion, but then it becomes clear that they are framed mosaics of stained glass. Some property of the glass makes it glow warmly, causing these portraits to look like living beings translated into stained glass and trapped in unchanging perfection.

Loht is an artistic shadow elf as well as a patron of the arts, and the pieces in the North Gallery represent both his efforts and those of the most talented of his people (and of course of changelings and the occasional mortal guest) at some of the more traditional forms of expression. As the heroes look more closely at Loht's work, the Dungeon Master can give them the information that follows.

The Statues: Each of the twenty-four statues depicts a different individual. As such, they range in size from the height of a human to that of a pixie. Though the statues are not labeled, characters ought to be able to pick out examples of the shee, muryan, powrie, and any other breed they have encountered, as well as a few races that are totally unfamiliar to them.

Those examining the statues quickly get the impression that they are being watched (true, but not by the statues). Loht is a very talented artist, and this feeling is a natural outgrowth of the lifelike nature of his work.

The Portraits: Twenty-four portraits hang on the walls of this room. As mentioned above, each has a bit of a glow to it that makes it look rather eerie. In fact, this effect is not magical but is caused by minute traces of naturally luminous compounds added to the glass itself.

Glass Guardian: One of the paintings is, in fact, a glass golem, placed in this room to guard it from thieves, vandals, and people just like the heroes. It is triggered by the use of magic in this room or any attempt to damage one of Loht's pieces. Previously cast spells do not trigger the golem when the heroes enter the room; only the actual casting of a spell in this chamber invokes the wrath of the guardian.

Glass Golem (1): AC 4; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d12 (sword); SA surprise, prismatic spray; SD hit only by +2 or better magical weapons; SW blunt weapons do double damage, *shatter* spell; SZ M (6′ tall); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 5,000.

Notes: *Surprise*—Opponents suffer a –3 penalty on surprise rolls. *Prismatic Spray*—Functions as the spell, affecting all within 12.5 feet (halved from 25 feet in the Shadow Rift). This ability can be used every three rounds. *Shatter*—In the wake of a *shatter* spell, all in melee have a percentage chance equal to twice the damage they inflict on the golem of instantly destroying the creature. *Healing*—A *mend* spell instantly restores the golem to full hit points. If exposed to sunlight (or a *continual light*), the golem regenerates 1 hp per round.

Personality: Remorseless and indefatigable.

5. Armory

The door to the armory is sealed with a *wizard lock* spell similar to the one on the front door. It opens only for Maeve and Loht (or, in his absence, Mohrg).

This room is a small but well-equipped armory. A sturdy, wooden rack holds a number of gleaming swords in the center of the room, and suits of chain mail hang on the walls flanking it. Bows and quivers cover the far wall, and the smell of lamp oil permeates the air.

This room is something of a treasure trove for parties without a great deal of magical treasure.

The Swords: The circular rack of swords is ornate and sturdy. A score of gleaming sabres stand here, ready to be claimed and put to work in the defense of Loht and the Shadow Rift. These weapons are not magical, but one is of exceptional quality. In the hands of anyone who has the sabre proficiency, it grants the wielder a +1 bonus on attack rolls. If the character is specialized in the use of the sabre, this bonus increases to +2. However, this nonmagical bonus does not allow the blade to harm creatures that can be struck only by enchanted weapons. This weapon is worth twice the price of a normal sabre. Of course, it can be sold only outside of the Shadow Rift.

If the heroes have lost any of their magical weapons during the adventure, the Dungeon Master can place them here so they may be reclaimed.

The Armor: Several suits of finely-crafted chain mail hang on the wall. One of these suits of armor is, as one might expect, *elven chain mail.* It will fit only a six-foot-tall character who is unusually lean. Anyone outside of these parameters is unable to make use of it "off the rack." Having it tailored is expensive and requires the skills of a shadow elf blacksmith of exceptional ability—or at least one of the changelings.

Archery Supplies: There are a dozen bows and a like number of buckskin quivers here as well. The bows are very slender, masterfully-crafted long bows. One of these bows is of exceptional quality, giving anyone proficient in its use a +1 bonus on all attack rolls. Again, this is a nonmagical bonus and does not allow the arrows fired from this bow to hit creatures normally harmed only by magical weapons.

Each quiver contains a dozen flight arrows, eleven of which have razor-edged obsidian tips and black fletching. One of the arrows in each quiver is fletched with white instead of black. This is a magical *arrow of extended range*, which doubles the range of the weapon from which it is fired. Thus, a bow with a short range of seventy feet extends to a short range of one hundred forty feet when firing this arrow. This arrow uses the new, doubled range for purposes of figuring modifiers. Although the arrow does not have an attack or damage bonus, it is effective against creatures that can be harmed only by weapons of +1 or better enchantment.

Guardians: In addition to the equipment stored in this place, a trio of powrie stand guard here at all times. By the time the heroes enter the room, they have hidden themselves away. As the characters look around, the powrie merely watch. When the characters are vulnerable, the tiny Arak then strike.

Arak, Powrie: AC 2; MV 9, fly 15 (A); HD 5; hp 15 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1 point (dagger) or 1d4 (bite); SA spells, bite, fear, backstab, shriek; SD +3 or better weapon to hit, immune to steel, electricity, and lightning; SW platinum, sunlight; MR 45%; SZ T (1´ tall); ML fanatic (18); Int high (14); AL CE; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Bite*—The venomous bite of a powrie inflicts 1d4 points of damage and forces foe to save vs. poison to avoid being blinded (as per the spell). *Spells*—Powrie can cast the spells listed below as 5th-level mages. *Fear*—At will, powrie can show a menacing grin that acts as a *fear* spell. *Backstab*—Triple damage. *Shriek*—Powrie can emit a high-pitched shriek, causing all opponents within 30 feet to save vs. spell to avoid deafness (per the spell).

Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Special Equipment: Daggers and darts (coated in type-O poison).

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*audible glamer, change self*, phantasmal force*, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern*, invisibility*; 3rd—*spectral force**.

*The results of these spells are halved in the Shadow Rift.

The powrie attempt to kill their targets quickly and without much fuss. If they are unable to do so, however, they attempt to escape and summon reinforcements.

6. Treasure Vault

Like the armory (area 5), the treasure vault is secured by a *wizard lock* spell. Unlike that room, however, this one opens only for Loht or Maeve. In addition, the entire place is masked by a *vacancy* spell, which makes it appear empty. When the heroes open this door, read them the following narrative:

The room before you lies dark and cold. A thick layer of dust covers the floor here, and large, intricate spider webs fill every corner. The breeze kicked up by your entrance is visible in the tiny swirls of dust that rise up from the floor. Judging from the stale taste of the air that rushes out to greet you, it has been a very long time since anyone has entered this place.

This illusion is extremely detailed, utilizing sight, smell, and taste; thus, it is difficult to bypass. Heroes may, however, try to disbelieve it if they find a reason why it does not seem realistic or plausible (such as having a *wizard lock* spell to protect an

empty room). Any hero who tries to disbelieve the sight before him or her can attempt a saving throw vs. spell with a –6 penalty. If the saving throw succeeds, that hero sees through the illusion. However, if the saving throw fails, that hero strongly believes the room to be empty, despite what his or her comrades may say.

If the heroes manage to defeat the *vacancy* spell and see this room for what it is, they are almost blinded by the gleam of gold. Piles of coins cover the floor, and chests filled with all manner of trinkets and treasures stand along the walls. This place has goblets, rings, crowns, medals, coins, whistles, and just about anything else that someone might ask for. Even more importantly, it is all solid gold—no silver or electrum or copper or anything else.

The heroes are free to take as much treasure as they like. They can load themselves up with so much wealth that they cannot stagger along at more than a crawl. No matter how much they take, there is still more (within reason, of course).

What exactly is the catch? Well, this is all faerie gold. Inside the Shadow Rift, it is very much what it appears to be. It is just as beautiful as real gold, and no one (not even a dwarf) can tell the difference. Outside of the Shadow Rift, however, it becomes nothing more than lead, stones, rock dust, dried leaves, and the like.

7. Stairwell

Spiral stairs run from the ground floor of the Malachite Palace to the roof. They are safe to travel and hardly warrant their own entries in the key. As such, the following description should suffice for all of them. The description can be altered to make each place unique if the Dungeon Master desires.

An ornate stairway coils [upward/downward] from this place. It looks impossibly frail, as if it could hardly bear its own weight, yet also retains the air of something that has stood for centuries and will stand for centuries to come.

If he wishes, Mohrg can speak a word of command that turns the stairs intangible. Should that happen, anyone who tries to climb or descend them discovers that they simply are not there, although their appearance is unchanged. If they discover this by stepping on them, they may fall quite some distance. Each level above the ground floor is assumed to be thirty feet above the previous one. Thus, a fall from the first floor inflicts 3d6 points of damage (1d6 per ten feet); a fall from the roof results in 12d6 points of damage.

8. Muryan Quarters

This room looks disturbingly like a military barracks, although it is much more ornate and beautiful than might be expected for such a place. Neatly made, ornate bunk beds line the walls, while a brace of tables and their accompanying chairs stand in the center of the room.

If the heroes have made their presence known somehow, Mohrg has warned his warriors to avoid them whenever possible, hoping that they will lead him to the *Crown of Arak*. Thus, the muryan who live in these quarters are hiding from the characters. They have transformed into ferrets and slipped beneath the pillows on the beds, waiting for the heroes to leave. They transform back only if discovered.

If the heroes have been stealthy and no alarm has sounded, then this room is full of off-duty muryan. The Dungeon Master should add the following description to the previous text:

No fewer than a dozen warriors are scattered about the room. Some are sleeping, others lie in bed reading books or declaiming poetry, and four of them crowd around a table playing some manner of word game. There can be no doubt that these wild-looking figures are kin to the dancing men who attacked Briggdarrow.

Arak, Muryan: AC 2; MV 15; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA spells, dance, slow, deafness, blindness; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, lightning, and electricity; SW mithral, sunlight; MR 15%; SZ M (5′ tall); ML fanatic (17); Int high (13); AL CN; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Dance*—Anyone struck by the muryan in melee must successfully save vs. spell or begin to dance (–4 penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class). *Slow*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or be *slowed* for the duration of the combat. *Deafness*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *deafness* spell. *Blindness*—Anyone struck by a muryan in melee must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *blindness* spell.

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*fire burst, magic missile* (×2), *shield*; 2nd—*flaming sphere, stinking cloud*; 3rd—*fireball*.

Though a dozen muryan wait in here, only four will attack on the first round. Four more leap into battle on the second round. The last four dance their way into the fray on round three.

9. Powrie Quarters

This room appears to be decorated with ornate, incredibly detailed doll furniture. Miniature beds, tables, and the like are neatly spread from wall to wall. Tiny dolls, every bit as intricate as their furnishings, are liberally spread throughout the place engaged in various activities.

Suddenly, you realize that these are not dolls! They are miniature people. You have come upon the private quarters of a dozen pixielike creatures.

By now, the players have probably encountered enough powrie to recognize the danger that surrounds them. All told, this room holds fifteen powrie. Five of them attack the players on the first round, followed by another five on the second, with the remaining five joining in on the third round.

Despite Mohrg's orders, the powrie do not readily retreat from battle. These fierce little shadow elves immediately disregard his instructions, attacking the heroes in a frenzy of bloodlust.

Arak, Powrie: AC 2; MV 9, fly 15 (A); HD 5; hp 15 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1 point (dagger) or 1d4 (bite); SA spells, fear, backstab, shriek; SD +3 or better weapon to hit, immune to steel, electricity, and lightning; SW platinum, sunlight; MR 45%; SZ T (1′ tall); ML fanatic (18); Int high (14); AL CE; XP 5,000 each.

Notes: *Bite*—The venomous bite of a powrie inflicts 1d4 points of damage and forces foe to save vs. poison to avoid being blinded (as per the spell). *Spells*—Powrie can cast the spells listed below as 5th-level mages. *Fear*—At will, powrie can show a menacing grin that acts as a *fear* spell. *Backstab*—Triple damage. *Shriek*—Powrie can emit a high-pitched shriek, causing all opponents within 30 feet to save vs. spell to avoid deafness (per the spell).

Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Special Equipment: Daggers and darts (coated in type-O poison).

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*audible glamer, change self*, phantasmal force*, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern*, invisibility*; 3rd—*spectral force**.

*The results of these spells are halved in the Shadow Rift.

10. The Loft

You stand on a large balcony that looks down into the throne room on one side. Four rough-hewn crystal pillars rise from the ground floor to the ceiling some sixty feet above. On the other side of the balcony is a column of crystal surrounding an immense pillar of dull red fire. Warm light from this amazing spectacle pours over this entire scene.

Scattered around this area are dozens of potted plants. Countless varieties of flowers fill the air with an overpowering perfume that makes your eyes burn and your nose tickle. Many of the plants glow softly, although their faint light is almost smothered by the glow of the great fire.

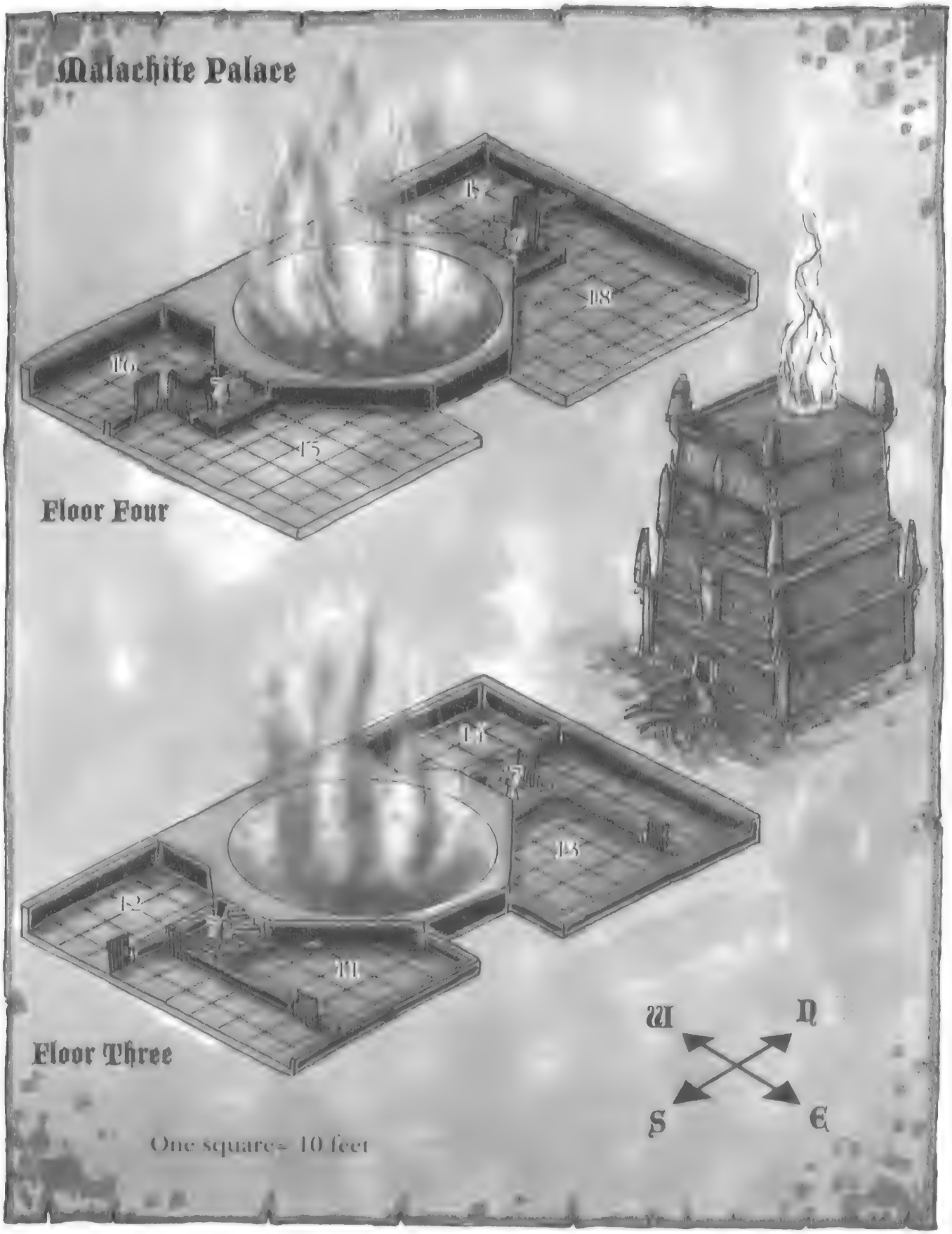
The plants on the loft are more or less harmless—provided that the heroes do not spend too much time here. At the end of every full turn that the heroes remain on the loft, each character must make a saving throw vs. poison. Failure indicates that the character suffers from the various pollens and fragrances in the room. Exactly what effect the poisons have is determined randomly and can be different for every character who fails the saving throw. No matter what its exact nature, the poison always instantaneously inflicts a –2 penalty to some type of die roll. **Table 7** lists the exact results.

Table 7:
Loft Allergens

Roll 1d10	Result Affected
1	Fear Checks
2	Horror Checks
3	Madness Checks
4	Attack Rolls
5	Damage Rolls
6	Initiative Rolls
7	Surprise Checks
8	Saving Throws
9	Physical Ability Checks[1]
10	Mental Ability Checks[2]

[1]Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution
[2]Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma

The effects of these toxins fade by one point per twelve hours. Thus, the penalties disappear completely within twenty-four hours. Multiple failures with similar effects extend this time further by doubling the modifier. Spells like *neutralize poison* combat these toxins normally.


Malachite Palace
Floor Four
Floor Three
One square= 10 feet

11. Loht's Studio

Loht's studio is sealed with a *wizard lock* spell which opens only for Loht himself.

You have entered what can only be an artist's studio. Several coffin-sized slabs of white marble are stacked like firewood in the corner. A single block of stone, which has been chipped away to reveal a vaguely human form, stands in the center of the room. Chips of white stone cover the floor around this work like newly-fallen snow.

A workbench along one wall is covered with a half-completed portrait in stained glass. Sheets of the colorful material, as well as rolls of the lead framing and solder used to hold it in place, line several tall shelves beside the table.

This room holds little of interest to the players, although some of the sculpting tools may be of use to them. The sheets of stained glass are fairly valuable, being worth no less than fifty gold pieces each. They are about three feet on a side, however, and are almost impossible to carry from this place intact.

12. Orb Studio

The orb studio is sealed with a *wizard lock* spell which opens only for Maeve or Loht.

This room is most unusual. In the center sits a narrow, white-cushioned table that looks almost like a plush operating table. Floating in the air above it is a transparent sphere of glass so perfectly formed that it could easily be a soap bubble. A dozen more of these delicate orbs are positioned in tripod holders on a rack near the door.

This is the room where Maeve and sometimes Loht work to create the orb sculptures in area 3. It is an incredibly dangerous area for anyone who is not an experienced practitioner of that art.

Examining the Orb: A closer examination of the table and orb reveals that a slender black cord is secured with wax to the side of the sphere. It hangs down to the table and is almost invisible against the polished black walls and floors. Only when placed before the white table or a similar light background is the thread clearly visible.

If the string is placed against the forehead of an intelligent being, his or her life force is instantly sucked inside the crystal sphere, a process very similar to the effects of a *magic jar* spell. The body, now an empty shell, collapses if not supported in some way. It is customary for the artist to lie on the table so that his or her body is not harmed when the spirit flees.

If this is attempted while another spirit inhabits the orb, nothing happens. Only an empty sphere is dangerous to those outside it. Touching the empty sphere without the use of the string is also safe, although the glass feels very cold to the touch.

Inside the Orb: Once it has absorbed a spirit, the orb begins to glow faintly. The higher the combined Intelligence and Wisdom score of the trapped person, the brighter the sphere glows. In no case, however, is the light brighter than that produced by a *light* spell.

The person inside the orb is aware of all that transpires in the room, although he or she sees it through a bright glare. Sounds from outside the sphere have a muffled sound, although anyone who taps on the glass creates a deafening pounding inside. None of the victim's other senses provide any input while the character is inside the orb.

If someone touches the orb, they can speak with the trapped spirit through simple thought, but they do not experience the powerful sensations associated with a finished sculpture (as described in area 3).

If the orb shatters while someone is in it, that spirit is instantly freed, but it is no longer linked to a body. At the instant the spirit is released, its former body dies. In game terms, this instantly transforms the character into an incorporeal undead creature very like a will-o'-wisp. If the *Requiem* rules for undead player characters are in use, the Dungeon Master may allow the player to continue running his or her character in this form. However, the shock of this sudden transformation requires a madness check.

Otherwise, the newly released spirit is driven mad by the breaking of the orb and the death of its body. When this happens, it attacks the party at once, hating them for what they have done to it.

Escaping the Orb: A person trapped in the orb can leave it only by force of will. In order to return to his or her body, the cord must be secured to the forehead and the glass. The trapped person must then make a successful ability check using the average of his or her Intelligence and Wisdom scores. This check can be attempted once per day. Elves and half-elves gain a +2 bonus on this check, while gnomes and dwarves suffer a –2 penalty. Psionicists of any race make this check with a +1 bonus.

Spells like *magic jar* can also transfer the spirit from the orb into the body. Other spells may or may not work for this, at the Dungeon Master's discretion. Certain psionic powers, if they are being used in the campaign, can also meet this need.

The Other Orbs: In order for an orb to be used in orb sculpture, it must be magically prepared. The orbs on the shelf have not been so readied and, as such, are nothing more than delicate glass globes. They are worth some fifty gold pieces each as curiosities but are so delicate that getting them away from this place intact seems almost impossible.

13. Dining Room

This is a small but well-appointed dining room. A long table and ten chairs, all apparently carved from gleaming black stone and inlaid with delicate golden tracery, occupy the center of the chamber. Gleaming plates, tableware, and goblets, all exquisitely crafted from gold, are set before each place, although you see no food or drink on the table.

This room is used only when Loht or Maeve wishes to entertain guests. As such, it has been several weeks since it was last put into service. This fact is not immediately obvious, however, for the unseen servants, who stand ready here at all times, keep the room spotlessly clean.

Heroes may freely examine the room in some detail without being challenged by the unseen servants. Anyone sitting at the table will find that his or her favorite meal suddenly appears on the plate and a favorite drink fills the goblet. The food is faerie food, with the same effects described earlier (see the Glossary). Pocketing any of the gold on the table angers the servants, who attack at once. In combat, these beings take on the characteristics of invisible stalkers.

Invisible Stalkers (2): AC 3; MV 12, fly 12 (A); HD 8; hp 35 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4 (vortex); SA surprise; SD invisibility; MR 30%; SZ M (8′ tall); ML elite (14); Int high (14); AL N; XP 3,000 each.

Notes: *Surprise*—Opponents suffer a –6 penalty to their surprise rolls. *Invisibility*—Opponents unable to see or detect invisible foes suffer a –2 penalty on attack rolls.

Personality: Loyal and relentless.

If the servants are defeated, the heroes are free to loot this room; if the player characters flee, the servants do not pursue (although they do attack the characters if they later reenter the room). Unfortunately, the enchantment of the plates and goblets does not function outside this chamber. Moreover, like the items in the treasure vault below, the dishes are all made out of faerie gold and turn into common dross when carried out of the Shadow Rift.

14. Kitchen

This is a large, well-appointed kitchen with a large oven in the south wall. Gleaming pots and pans hang on the west wall above a rack which features a bewildering assortment of cooking utensils. A cabinet stands near the door, filled with an extensive array of herbs and spices, which fill the room with their bitter scent.

Curiously, for such a well-equipped kitchen, a single, important commodity is missing. Apart from the herbs and spices, you see no trace of any kind of food here.

This kitchen supplies meals for Maeve, Loht, their guests, and retainers. All of the cooking and cleaning is done by a pair of unseen servants similar to those in the dining room. Again, the heroes can poke around in here pretty much at will. Should they attempt to steal anything or damage this place, however, the servants attack.

It may seem odd to the heroes who have not yet been in room 13 that there is no food here, and odd to those who have that this room even exists. Actually, this kitchen predates the creation of the magical dinner service in room 13 and is now only used when the fey-lords decide to have food prepared in the old-fashioned way as a novelty.

Of potential interest to the party is the source of fire for the stove. A single opening in the crystal shaft that surrounds the great fire allows flame to be shunted into this chamber. A series of pipes and valves makes this stove very much like a modern gas-fueled range. If severe damage is done to the wrought-iron stove, these vents may fracture, filling the room with fire. The resulting conflagration may be treated as a 10d6 *fireball* spell which continues to do damage each round until the vents are somehow repaired.

15. Loht's Chambers

Loht's chambers are sealed with a *wizard lock* spell that opens only for Loht himself.

These chambers are decorated in elegant tapestries and plush furs. Comfortable pillows are thrown about, although you see no tables or chairs of any kind.

Two unusual sources of light illuminate this room. Dozens of fireflies flit to and fro, periodically contributing their own yellow-white flares. In addition to these blinking flashes of light, vases with delicate, luminescent flowers stand in every corner, throwing rainbow hues on the gleaming black walls. The shadows left by the vases themselves seem to writhe and twist, as if trying to escape from the multicolored glow.

Along one wall stands a great bed, draped with a canopy so delicate that it almost looks like a veil of mist. As you look through the gauzy folds, you suddenly realize that someone is peering back out at you!

The large bed is actually empty; what the heroes see is a carved face that protrudes from the dark wood of the headboard. Its chiseled features are those of a beautiful woman, her eyes closed in an expression of peaceful sleep. Characters who have visited the North Gallery (room 4) may recognize the woman as one of those whose portraits in stained glass adorn that chamber.

Loht's room is filled with valuable objects created by generations of sithkin, ranging from the tapestries on the walls to the silk pillows on the floor. All told, these items are worth about fifteen hundred gold pieces. However, much of the stuff is very bulky and difficult to transport, much less carry back up the cliffs or through the Fracture and out of the Shadow Rift.

Danger: The plants and fireflies in this room are harmless. However, Loht left a cleverly concealed guardian behind to watch over these chambers in his absence.

Buzzing around the room along with the fireflies is a stinging insect that looks very much like them. Only the fact that it does not light up could reveal its variant nature, and that, of course, is not going to be noticed unless it is singled out. For each turn that the party spends in this room, the guardian fly attempts to sting one of the heroes. This does no damage to the character, although he or she feels a sharp sting from the bite. A successful Dexterity check allows the hero to swat the fly, killing it. Otherwise, the insect slips away unharmed.

Anyone bitten by the insect must make a saving throw vs. poison with a –4 penalty. Success indicates that the bite does no harm to the character. Failure, however, indicates that the character is infected with a shadow virus (as described in the *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III*).

If that volume is not available, the Dungeon Master can use the following guidelines for the virus. Shortly after the failed saving throw, the victim begins to run a low fever and feel a tingling on his or her scalp. Twenty-four hours later, his or her shadow begins to fray around the edges like a tattered cloth. This continues until the shadow is lost utterly after the seventh day. Once a character loses his or her shadow, the body begins to become insubstantial. On the fourteenth day of infection, the victim fades away and dies. He or she then rises again immediately as a shadow (as described in the Monstrous Manual tome). If a *continual light* spell is placed on a small *blessed* diamond and the victim swallows this stone within the first seven days of the infection, he or she is cured. The reaction of the virus to the gem destroys them both, so the diamond is lost in the process. Ironically, if the PCs have lost their shadows, they are immune to this virus.

The heroes are unlikely to have any knowledge of this strange disease, but any portune, shee, or sith can easily diagnose the cause and cure, although it's highly unlikely that the shadow-loving sith would do so and the other Arak would demand some considerable service in return.

The Black Pouch: Any character who searches around the huge bed should make a Wisdom check. If successful, that hero finds a small, black leather pouch under the bed. Inside this bag are one dozen nuts which look more or less like hazelnuts.

These nuts are deadly to humans, demihumans, and humanoids. They contain a type J poison (ingested, 1–4 minutes, death/25). The nuts can be eaten or boiled to create a sweet-tasting tea. In the latter form, however, the poison is diluted, and the imbiber receives a +4 bonus to his saving throw.

These nuts were a gift to Loht from Malinda, the Princess of the Powrie. The Prince of Shadows found them very useful on his recent journey to the outer world. Originally, he had twenty nuts, but eight of them have already been used to eliminate potential enemies and inconvenient opponents on the surface.

16. Bathroom

This is the most luxurious bathroom you've ever seen, with a half dozen wash basins and two enormous gilded bathing tubs. Two free-standing mirrors are positioned near the wash basins along with a rack of fine, silk towels. Four wooden barrels filled with clear water stand between the basins and the tubs.

This is Maeve and Loht's personal bathing chamber and a true shrine to luxury. Of special interest are the golden bathing tubs. Any water poured into them is instantly heated to a warmth that most people find ideal for bathing. While hardly powerful magic, this is certainly among the most beneficial enchantments many characters are ever likely to encounter.

A pair of invisible servants stand ready to tend to the needs of bathers. They generally ignore the heroes, punishing only pilferers or vandals. When this happens, they attack as invisible stalkers.

Invisible Stalkers (2): AC 3; MV 12, fly 12 (A); HD 8; hp 35 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4 (vortex); SA surprise; SD invisibility; MR 30%; SZ M (8′ tall); ML elite (14); Int high (14); AL N; XP 3,000 each.

Notes: *Surprise*—Opponents suffer a –6 penalty to their surprise rolls. *Invisibility*—Opponents unable to see or detect invisible foes suffer a –2 penalty on attack rolls.

Personality: Loyal and relentless.

17. Hall of Remembrance

This room is sealed with a *wizard lock* spell which opens only for Maeve or Loht.

This small, quiet chamber has the look of a shrine, or perhaps a museum. The walls are lined with small shelves, each of which bears a single item—a withered flower, a hair ribbon, a tuning peg from a lute or mandolin. Some of the items are so ancient that they look like they'd fall to dust at the merest touch, while others appear relatively recent. A few larger items are placed on pedestals dotted about the room. There seems to be little rhyme or reason to this sequested selection of odds and ends.

This room contains mementoes from long-dead mortal lovers of both Maeve and Loht. There are roughly fifty items in all, most of them valueless and many of them fragile with age. No traps or guardians lurk here, but anyone destroying or damaging a single of these items earns the undying enmity of either Loht or Maeve (or both).

18. Maeve's Room

This room was formerly sealed with a *wizard lock* spell which opened only for Maeve; now it opens to the touch. It is now used by Mohrg.

This room is an odd combination of bedroom and armory. In addition to a plush canopied bed, a well-padded wingback chair, an armoire, and full-length mirror—all of which bespeak an elegant, decidedly feminine touch—the walls are lined with an assortment of swords, axes, and daggers. If the keeper of this collection has half the skill that this accumulation suggests, he or she will be a deadly opponent indeed.

Mohrg has taken no steps to guard his chambers, because he feels confident that no one would be able (or dare) to enter them. This does not mean, however, that the heroes can just waltz through this room and help themselves to his collection.

The Dungeon Master can assume that any type of slashing weapon listed in the *Player's Handbook* (or *Player's Option™: Combat & Tactics*), other than a polearm, is available here. For the most part, these are simply normal weapons, although they are all of excellent craftsmanship and worth twice their standard values.

Should the heroes wish to arm themselves from this room, they can attempt to do so. However, the second they take one of the weapons off the wall, Mohrg's *sword of dancing* attacks.

Magical Weapons: Two magical weapons are mounted on the walls of this room. One of them is a valuable treasure while the other is a deadly trap left here by Mohrg for times like this. An empty space is left on the wall for Mohrg's *scimitar of life stealing*, which he carries with him most of the time.

The most valuable item that the heroes find in this room is Mohrg's *sword of wounding*. This is a +1 magical weapon that can be very helpful in combat. The Dungeon Master needs to keep an eye on any player using such a blade, however, for it is very easy to cross the line and use the weapon for evil purposes. Should that happen, powers checks will be required.

Mohrg's collection also includes a *sword of dancing*. This weapon has been charged with the protection of Mohrg's possessions. Unlike the traditional blade of this type (as described in the *Dungeon Master Guide*), this sword can move on its own, attacking anyone who damages or appears to be stealing one of Mohrg's weapons. The sword has a THAC0 of 14 and inflicts a base of 1d8 points of damage with each of its two attacks per round. On the first round, the sword functions as a +1 blade, +2 on the second, +3 on the third, and +4 on the fourth. On the fifth round of battle, the sword returns to +1, and the cycle begins again. The *sword of dancing* cannot be physically hit, though certain magical attacks could affect it, as determined by the Dungeon Master.

If the heroes opt to flee the room (without the other magical sword, of course), the sword does not pursue them, instead returning to the wall after they leave. If they leave with the *sword of wounding*, however, the guardian weapon pursues them like an avenging angel until they either return the treasure to Mohrg's room, abandon it somewhere in the Malachite Palace, or leave the palace altogether.

19. Rooftop

You stand atop the gleaming black roof of the Malachite Palace. Four great spires rise up from the corners of the structure like the talons of a great beast, but they are hardly the most impressive feature of this area.

Rising out of a huge circular hole is a great pillar of red fire. It streams into the darkness overhead, washing everything in a blood-red light. The heat from this inferno is so intense that it threatens to burn you even at this distance.

The roof itself is of little importance in the adventure, although it is here that the climax of this scene takes place. Once the players reach this location, the adventure continues with "The Finale."

The Finale

When Maeve learned that Loht had returned with the *Sword of Arak*, she began to suspect that his plans were almost ripe. She feared to entrust the *Crown of Arak* to another and so elected to hide it to keep it out of the hands of Loht and his allies, tossing the crown into the great flame. In retrospect, her decision is the only thing that has saved her people thus far and kept Gwydion from fully entering into the Demiplane of Dread.

Retrieving the Crown

Exactly how the heroes go about recovering the crown is up to them. To do so, they must confront two major obstacles, however. As both of these hazards might be overcome in many different ways, the Dungeon Master must adjudicate the specific efforts of the players.

The Pillar of Fire: The *Crown of Arak* rests at the bottom of this great inferno, some one hundred feet below the rooftop. In order to recover it, the heroes must have some means of making themselves immune to the scorching heat of the fire. Anyone exposed to the fire itself suffers damage equal to that of a 10d6 *fireball* spell each round. Saving throws do not benefit those within the inferno, so damage never halves as it might normally for the spell.

Although the eternal flame is magical in nature, it is considered a normal fire for the purposes of spellcasting and saving throws. Because of this, items like a *ring of fire resistance* offer complete protection from the blaze, as do other magical items, such as a *scroll of protection from fire* or a *helm of brilliance*. Magical items like a *wand of flame extinguishing* can snuff the fire, but this requires expending one charge for each round that the fire must remain doused.

Magical spells can also be used to fend off the heat and flames. In some cases, as with the priest's *resist fire/resist cold* spell, the damage is halved. Others, like *flame walk* or *protection from fire*, offer complete immunity to the blaze.

The Crystal Shaft: Once the heroes have come up with a way to protect themselves from the fire, they must still descend into the shaft to recover the *Crown of Arak*. This requires them to rappel or otherwise scale a distance of about one hundred feet.

Thieves and other characters find that normal climbing techniques are somewhat risky, especially since much of the climbing equipment is flammable. The surface of the crystal is very slick and offers few truly secure handholds. As such, attempts to recover the crown using the thief's ability to climb walls suffer a –25% penalty.

Of course, countless magical means can overcome this obstacle. Spells like *spider climb* and *fly* allow a hero to quickly descend the shaft, recover the crown, and return to the roof.

The crystal shaft itself is the source of the fire. It is also highly magical and cannot be passed through via spells like *passwall*. It is completely immune to physical harm, so tunneling through it is not possible. If the players have some exceptional idea for how to rupture or badly damage the pillar, they trigger an explosion of incredible power. At the very least, this results in a huge explosion (as described in area 14). In fact, rupturing the pillar could even feasibly destroy the palace and

everyone in it, including the player characters.

Other Methods: Player characters are notoriously clever. It is possible that they come up with a way to recover the *Crown of Arak* without having to face the above challenges. For example, a *wizard eye* or *clairvoyance* spell might be used to pinpoint the location of the crown, and then *telekinesis* could quickly pull it up to the roof.

Because characters may have also invented their own spells or have unique magical items introduced by a specific Dungeon Master, it is impossible to provide rules governing every possibility. The Dungeon Master should simply be fair and allow the heroes to succeed if their plan has merit. Successfully recovering the crown should feel like a moment of triumph for the heroes.

Shadows Strike

Once they see that the heroes have recovered the crown, the sith who have been shadowing the player characters suddenly reveal themselves. Within a round Mohrg himself appears on the roof to claim it for his master. The near-instantaneous arrival of these warriors should be a shock to the heroes, especially if they thought they had been sneaking about unnoticed. Read the following narrative to the players:

Suddenly, you are no longer alone on the roof top. The shadows at your feet rise up and become tall, pale, elf-like figures, each armed with a needle-sharp rapier.

At the head of the stairs, a tall figure with bronze skin and hair like fire glides out onto the roof, his broad smile anything but friendly.

"I am Mohrg," he says in a booming voice, "the Dancing Prince, Lord of the Muryan, and Guardian of the Malachite Palace. You have served my master Loht well by recovering the Crown of Arak. *If you will kindly turn it over to me, you may be assured that your deaths will be honorable. If not . . . "*

Dealing With Mohrg

Mohrg is willing to make a deal with the characters. He is concerned only with the crown (he is loyal only to Loht, who will reward him greatly) and really does not care what concessions he has to make in order to get it. The best deal the heroes should be able to get is being allowed to keep their weapons in exchange for giving up the crown, whereupon the Dancing Prince orders a dozen muryan to escort them from

the palace. He is thoroughly chaotic and loves battle, so there's always a chance that he orders his troops to slaughter the heroes despite any previous promises. The sith, by contrast, are lawful and keep their bargains, should events fall out so that the characters wind up negotiating with them. Under no circumstance will an Unseelie Arak allow the strangers to leave with the crown in their possession.

Mohrg, the Dancing Prince (Arak, muryan): AC 1 (breastplate); MV 15; HD 9; hp 63; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+3/1d8+3 (*scimitar of life stealing*, Strength bonus); SA spells, dance, slow, deafness, blindness, life drain (from the sword); SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to wooden weapons, lightning, and electricity; SW mithral, sunlight; MR 20%; SZ M (5′ tall); ML fanatic (18); Int exceptional (16); AL CN; XP 6,000.

Notes: *Dance*—Anyone struck by the Dancing Prince in combat must successfully save vs. spell at a –2 penalty or suffer the effects of *Otto's irresistible dance*. *Slow*—Anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must successfully save vs. spell or be *slowed* for the duration of the combat. *Deafness*—Once combat begins, anyone within 30 feet of Mohrg must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *deafness* spell. *Blindness*—Anyone struck by Mohrg in melee must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *blindness* spell.

Personality: Battle-loving, Bloodthirsty, violent.

Special Equipment: Scimitar of life stealing. This sword drains one level or HD from a victim with a natural attack roll of 20. Mohrg gains as many hit points as the opponent loses, up to his maximum of 63.

Spells (4/3/2/1): 1st—*fire burst, magic missile (×2), shield*; 2nd—*flaming sphere (×2), web*; 3rd—*fireball, lightning bolt*; 4th-level—*wall of fire.*

Arak, Sith (12): AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 40 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8 (needle-sharp rapier); SA spells, gaze, death aura; SD parry, +1 or better magical weapons to hit, immune to steel weapons (even magical ones), fire, and heat, silent movement (75%); SW silver weapons, sunlight; MR 30%; SZ M (6′ tall); ML fearless (19); Int genius (17); AL LE; XP 6,000.each.

Notes: *Gaze*—Any who meet a sith's piercing gaze must successfully save vs. spell or lose his or her nerve, behaving as if under a *fumble* spell. *Death Aura*—At will, a sith can force all living creatures within 30 feet to make immediate fear checks. *Parry*—Sith may forgo any or all of their melee attacks in a round in order to parry, with a successful parry negating a melee attack.

Personality: Cold, calculating, elegant.

Spells (4/3/2/1): chill touch (×4), *spectral hand* (×3), *vampiric touch* (×2), *enervation.*

Fighting Mohrg: This battle must be a close fight which the heroes cannot win by brute force. In order to triumph, they must use their wits as well as their weapons. A dozen sith plus the Dancing Prince make a formidable force. If the Dungeon Master feels that this many opponents will slaughter the heroes, he or she should lower the number of sith present. Likewise, the numbers can be increased if he or she feels these are too few to pose a sufficient challenge.

If the heroes defeat Mohrg, they can claim his powerful *scimitar of life stealing* for themselves. Care must be taken, however, for the use of such an evil blade requires a powers check.

The Corpse Candle: If one of the heroes fell under the influence of the corpse candle in Briggdarrow, he or she has an unexpected ally in this battle. That hero will feel compelled to confront Mohrg. Each round thereafter that the Dancing Prince is in combat with the hero inflicted with the corpse candle, Mohrg is attacked by a plume of fire summoned from the eternal flame (assuming it has not somehow been extinguished). This requires the Muryan Lord to make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapons or suffer 2d6 points of damage each time.

If Mohrg is defeated and slain, the corpse candle is satisfied; it then leaves the hero in order to rest peacefully in its grave. Should Mohrg be left alive after this battle, the hero remains host to the undead being.

Fleeing from Mohrg: The best option for the heroes in this situation is undoubtedly to turn tail and run for their lives. After all, once they have the *Crown of Arak*, they gain nothing from a prolonged battle with the Dancing Prince and the sith. The prize from this bit of the adventure is the crown itself, and any savvy group of players should recognize this fact. DMs who want to encourage this prudent strategy can have Mohrg call for reinforcements and allow the heroes to hear or see powrie, muryan, and changelings reinforcements on their way to join in the battle.

If the heroes lose the *Crown of Arak* to Mohrg in the battle, they are not pursued by his warriors. In fact, the characters are thereafter pretty much ignored by all of Loht's minions until they begin to approach the Darkenheights. At this point, his minions do everything within their powers to stop the heroes from reaching the Obsidian Gate and interfering with Loht's plans.

Continuing the Adventure

Once the battle with Mohrg and his soldiers is resolved, the players can get started on the last leg of the adventure. This entails a trek across the Stowndowns and Black Marsh and a final ascent of the Darkenheights to reach the Obsidian Gate.

Scene Eleven: The Precipice

A man trying to escape never thinks himself sufficiently concealed.

—Victor Hugo
"Cosette"
Les Misérables

In this scene, the heroes face a pair of difficult challenges. First, they must escape from the packs of teg sent by Mohrg to hunt them down (if they still possess the *Crown of Arak*, that is). Second, they must find some way to descend the four-hundred-foot cliff that separates the Greenlands from the Stowndowns.

Hunted

The journey from the Malachite Palace to the Stowndowns is not an easy one for the heroes. Mohrg (or his successor) looses a terrible pursuit and chases them day and night. The only way for the heroes to escape from this menace is to either leave the Shadow Rift or descend into the Stowndowns. As the former option ends the adventure, they hopefully choose the latter.

The Teg

The cunning, animalistic teg are excellent trackers and can speak with all the animals of the forest. Evading them is almost impossible.

The Dungeon Master should stage at least one, and perhaps as many as three, encounters with the teg before the heroes reach the Stowndowns. Each of these encounters should have at least six teg. In one of these encounters, the shadow elves are traveling with a pack of about twelve foxes. As always, Dungeon Masters are encouraged to alter these numbers in order to make the encounters exciting for the players.

Arak, Teg (6): AC 4; MV 6, burrow 12; HD 3; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (claws or bite); SA grab, howl, spells; SD hit only by +2 or better magical weapons, immune to wooden weapons, cold, and ice-based attacks; SW gold, sunlight; MR 30%; SZ S (3′ tall); ML average (9); Int high (14); AL NE; XP 3,000 each.

Note: *Spells*—Teg cast the spells listed below as 5th-level clerics. *Grab*—Teg delight in burrowing up from below, seizing unwary opponents, and dragging them suddenly down into the ground where the whole pack can attack the hampered character; they have a 75% chance to hide in shadows, making it easier for them to carry out such murderous ambushes. *Howl*—When a teg howls, all within 30 feet must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell.

Personality: Feral and cunning.

Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*animal friendship, invisibility to animals, locate animals or plants;* 2nd—*charm person or mammal, snake charm, speak with animals;* 3rd—*summon insects.*

Foxes (12): AC 7; MV 15; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (teeth); SZ S; ML unsteady (6); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 15 each.

Notes: These are wild animals who have been befriended by the teg.

Personality: Wild and cunning.

Battling the Teg: The teg are not particularly deadly foes in a fair fight, which is why they never fight fair. Their cunning at ambushes more than makes up for their small size and lack of exceptionally damaging attacks.

The teg favor long chases in which they wear down their enemies with numerous small ambushes before closing in for a kill. If the heroes are not the sort of people who make for a good hunt, the teg attempt to pick them off one by one with ambushes from below. For the feral teg, the hunt itself is far more satisfying than the actual kill.

Escaping From the Teg: The teg can be beaten in battle or driven off for a time by a good defense. They do not, however, stay away for long. As soon as they have a chance to regroup and gather more hunters to replace their losses, they attack again.

Simply running away from the teg works for a time, but the heroes must eventually come to a stop when they reach the great precipice at the eastern edge of the Greenlands. Besides, running away only amuses the teg and makes them more determined to hunt down the party who are providing them with such good sport.

The Precipice

When the characters reach the eastern edges of the Greenlands, they find themselves at the top of a great precipice. On the average, the descent from the Greenlands to the Stowndowns is about four hundred and fifty feet of vertical cliffs. A thief or experienced mountaineer might be able to make such a descent safely, but anyone else faces a daunting challenge.

Descent

Exactly how the heroes go about descending into the Stowndowns is up to the players. The following methods are the most likely, but the Dungeon Master should be prepared to rule on more unusual ones as the need arises.

Climbing: As mentioned above, this is a very dangerous climb. Strong winds buffet the climbers as they descend the cliff, making it an extremely difficult task.

Attempts to descend the cliff should be resolved using the climbing rules in the *Player's Handbook*. In game terms, the precipice is a rough surface, so most characters can at least make some attempt at climbing it. The stiff winds that swirl along the precipice impose a –10% penalty on the skill check of anyone attempting the climb.

As pointed out in the *Player's Handbook*, the best way to get down a cliff like this is not climbing, but rappelling. This requires a *lot* of rope (since most characters at the bottom of a rope will not be able to untie the knots at the top and bring it with them) and probably several stops along the way, plus the guidance of one or two skilled mountaineers.

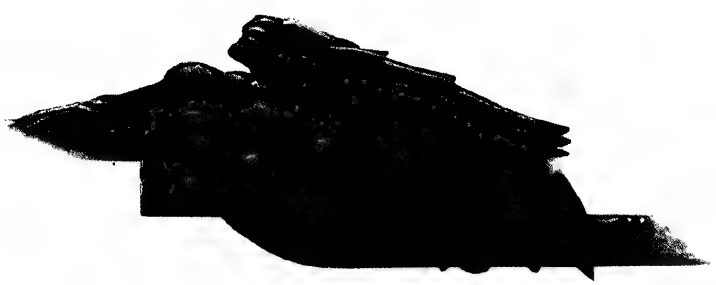
In order to rappel down the cliff in stages, a character with the mountaineering proficiency must anchor the rope at the top and then travel down it to find a safe ledge for the climbers to assemble on. From that point, the process is repeated as needed until all the heroes have reached the bottom. Finding a safe ledge requires a successful mountaineering proficiency check. Failure indicates that the route chosen proves unsuitable or that the shelf cannot bear their combined weight. At this point, the heroes must completely reverse their descent and try again from another location at least one half mile from this one.

Flying or Gliding: It is possible that the heroes have some means of flying, gliding, or otherwise avoiding the hazardous prospect of climbing down the cliff. As long as care is used, this is an excellent way for the heroes to overcome the obstacle before them.

Characters who do not plan their actions carefully, however, are asking for a lot of trouble. Jury-rigged hang gliders or parachutes are not only anachronistic, they are very dangerous. The Dungeon Master should assign such objects a chance of failure based upon the skills of the designer and the materials used to craft them. As a rule, such devices ought to have at least a 25% chance of outright catastrophic failure.

When the heroes attempt to use their flying/gliding machines, the Dungeon Master should roll for success. If the device functions, so be it. The hero using it reaches the ground safely. If not, percentile dice should again be rolled to see what fraction of the roughly five hundred foot descent was completed before the device failed. A roll of 20%, for example, indicates that the character safely traveled one hundred feet before the flying contraption failed. At that point, he or she falls the remaining four hundred feet. Characters suffer 1d6 points of damage per ten feet fallen, up to a maximum of 20d6 (the all-too-aptly named "terminal velocity").

Magic: Many magical spells and items might help safely overcome this formidable hazard. Perhaps the easiest are *feather fall* and *spider climb*. More inventive (and higher-level) possibilities include *fly, wraithform, dimension door,* and *teleport.* Useful magical items include just about anything that flies (like a *broom of flying* or a *cloak of the bat*) or which allows a character to climb or teleport. Be sure to keep an eye on durations, however, both for items and spells.



Encounters

If the Dungeon Master wants to spice up this part of the adventure, he or she can introduce a brief skirmish with some sort of animal or monster. The following two encounters can be used as they are presented, or they can serve as examples for the Dungeon Master to expand upon.

Climbing: As the heroes descend the cliffs, they come upon a small cave. This recess in the stone lies beneath a small rock ledge, so that it is hidden from above. As soon as the first character reaches the mouth of the cave, a blur of motion snatches him or her into the darkness. If the other heroes do not move quickly, they lose their companion to the hook horror lurking within.

Hook horror (1): AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/2d6 (claw/claw/beak); SA surprised only on a roll of 1; SW poor eyesight (compensated for with excellent hearing); SZ L (9′ tall); ML steady (12); Int low (7); AL N; XP 175.

Notes: *Beak*—On any round where both hook attacks succeed, the monster automatically hits with its beak. If either hook misses, it does not attack with its beak.

Personality: Territorial and predatory.

The best way for the Dungeon Master to present this encounter is to have the lowest climber suddenly vanish with a shriek. That hero must then spend at least one round in single combat with the hook horror while his or her companions race to rescue their vanished friend. Depending on the hero's personality, the Dungeon Master may mandate a fear check when the scope of his or her peril becomes clear to the character.

Slow or indecisive allies may leave the poor fellow to face the hook horror by himself or herself for an extended period of time. Indeed, those who are too slow may find themselves arriving in time to bury or avenge their companion instead of saving him or her. Those who merely abandon their ally to the cave beast should probably be forced to make powers checks.

Flying: Far below the Stowndowns lies the Black Marsh, a terrible morass filled with the evil, restless spirits of the dead. From time to time, some of the creatures in that dreadful mire make their way to the Stowndowns to hunt for food. In this particular case, that creature happens to be a crimson death (as described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome).

Because of the darkness of the Shadow Rift, the players are unlikely to see the misty creature as it rises to attack them. Because of this, the heroes receive –3 penalties on their surprise checks.

Crimson Death (1): AC 0 (4 after feeding); MV Fl 12 (FL 6 after feeding) (B); HD 13; hp 65; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3d10 (blood drain); SA +4 initiative bonus; SD hit only by +2 or better magical weapons (+1 weapons after feeding); SW partially solidifies after inflicting 30 points of damage; SZ M; ML champion (16); Int genius (18); AL NE; XP 9,000.

Notes: This insubstantial creature has a telekinetic ability that more or less mimics average human strength.

Personality: Ravenous and diabolical.

The crimson death attacks by swooping around the flying characters. If they are riding on a *carpet of flying* or similar magical item, it attempts to knock one or more characters off; they must make successful Dexterity checks to stay on. Those whom it dislodges are caught in its telekinetic grip and carried off to be consumed in safety.

The Stowndowns

Once the heroes reach the bottom of the cliff, they arrive on the rocky expanse known as the Stowndowns. The adventure continues from here with the first scene of Act Three: Door to Darkness.

There was a contagion in the
very air that blew from that haunted
region; it breathed forth an atmosphere
of dreams and fancies
infecting all the land.
—Washington Irving
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Act Three
Door to Darkness

Scene Twelve: The Stowndowns

Monarch is night
Of all eldest things,
Pain and affright,
Rapturous wings.

—William Rose Benét
"Night"
The Falconer of God

In this scene, the heroes must cross the Stowndowns as they travel eastward with the *Crown of Arak* toward the Obsidian Gate. During their journey they encounter the erdluitle. These creatures are not Arak but former servitors of the shadow elves who long ago fled and now live hidden lives in areas shunned by the more fastidious fey.

The erdluitle are neutral good creatures with the same game statistics as the pech (see "Elemental, Earth Kin" in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome).

Into the Stowndowns

The Stowndowns is an expanse of tortured and barren terrain. Cracks, fissures, rock outcroppings, and similar features make it difficult and dangerous to travel in these lands.

Catching Their Breath

The Dungeon Master should give the heroes a period of respite after the chase across the Greenlands and the harrowing descent of the precipice. With all they have been through, a chance to rest, heal, and recover expended spells should be welcomed by all.

Exactly how the Dungeon Master presents such a situation will certainly vary from game to game. The heroes may find a shallow cave in which to hide, a secluded cul-de-sac where they can make camp, or some other area in which a few hours can be spent safely.

Mood: In any event, the heroes should not feel as though they have found much of a safe haven. Even the few hiding places that the heroes do find could be inhabited by mundane creatures or objects (for the Shadowrift, that is), which the heroes must chase out or tolerate in order to stay there. For example, they may duck into a den inhabited by bears that walk on two legs or a thick undergrowth that has been claimed by rabbits with red glowing eyes. A thick stand of trees might provide good cover, but every time the heroes look around, the trees have moved a few feet in one direction or another, often opening up a clear line of sight to the sky. Some adventuring parties might even think to hide within the boughs of a large tree, which might work out fine except for a pitch-black owl that sits and stares all night long at whoever is on watch, and is smart enough to move to another location whenever any hero prepares an offensive action; no sooner do they give up looking for it than they discover it staring placidly at them from another branch.

Ominous Tidings

At this point, the Dungeon Master should make it clear to the heroes that they have not been forgotten by the shadow elves. To prove this, the following encounters can occur while the characters rest.

Nightmares: High overhead, the heroes see trios of flying beasts circling like vultures above the wastes of the Stowndowns. These are elite muryan troops riding upon nightmares (as described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome). The characters should not actually encounter the beasts or their riders, however; the purpose of these creatures is to remind characters that they need to keep moving.

If the heroes remain too long in one place, of course, the Dungeon Master can have a trio of muryan riders notice and attack them. The fact that their location has come to the attention of the shadow elves should be more than enough to get the heroes moving again.

Teg Packs: The hunting teg who chased the heroes across the Greenlands do not allow their prey to escape so easily. Dungeon Masters should allow the heroes to spot teams of foxes and their feral masters moving back and forth along the base of the great cliff.

As with the nightmares, the heroes need not have an actual encounter with the teg. However, if they remain in place too long, the teg can be seen to pick up the party's trail and begin to move after them. This also ought to get the party moving again.

Powrie: As with the nightmares and teg packs, heroes in hiding could spot a swarm of powrie fly by, casting to and fro like angry hornets as they search for the player characters.

So long as the characters take reasonable precautions they should evade these searchers, but such sightings should convince them that the hunt is most definitely up.

Moving On

After the heroes have rested and started on their way again, the Dungeon Master should allow them to have their first encounter with the erdluitle. The following text can be read aloud to the players at this point:

You move through a tortured land of sand and stone. A steady wind howls through this dark place, making conversation difficult. In addition, this gale seems to blow at you from all sides, stinging you with sand and choking you with dust. Unlike the Greenlands, which seemed all too alive, this seems to be a dead or dying land.

Without warning, the ground heaves to one side and drops out from under you. The wind is instantly muffled, and a wall of jagged stone seems to rise around you. In mere seconds, you find yourselves standing at the center of a fifty-foot circle ringed by a twenty-foot-high stone rampart. It is difficult not to notice the similarities between this place and a gladiatorial arena.

As the heroes consider this situation, they almost certainly make an effort to examine the stone or climb out of the well. The first hero to do so is in for something of a surprise, as the following narrative indicates:

As you begin to look at the rough surface of the wall, you notice that the swirls and patterns in the stone have the semblance of sleeping faces. Looking closer, you see that this is more than a singular chance occurrence; the wall boasts several such countenances. Before you can fully make sense of this fact, their eyes open, and you find yourself pinned by stern, accusing gazes.

The sudden revelation of these faces should come as a shock to the heroes. In all likelihood, this requires a fear check on the part of the person who first notices them.

At this point, the adventure continues with "Meeting the Erdluitle."

Meeting the Erdluitle

What happens at this point in the adventure is entirely up to the heroes. If they treat the erdluitle with friendliness and consideration, these shadow elves can do much to help the heroes. If the heroes attack the pech, then the quest may end unpleasantly here and now.

While the heroes are still coming to grips with the eyes in the wall, read aloud the following narrative:

Before your eyes, the surface of the wall begins to ripple like water. One by one, the faces begin to protrude, becoming three-dimensional figures instead of mere images. Then, one after another, more than a score of short figures actually step out of the wall to stand in a ring around you.

The small beings look very much like slender, almost emaciated gnomes, except that they lack the bulbous noses common to gnomekind. Instead, their features, however, are round and flat. Their tawny skin and chestnut hair blend perfectly with their simple leather tunics and trousers.

Each of these mysterious creatures holds a heavy pick-axe. Although not raised to strike, these weapons still look menacing.

The next actions that the heroes take decide the course of their encounter with the erdluitle.

Confrontation

If the heroes react with violence to the appearance of these Arak, the erdluitle respond in kind. They are distrustful of strangers and expected nothing less from these trespassers.

Erdluitle (24): AC 3; MV 9; HD 4; hp 32 each; THAC0 17 (+1 Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (picks, +3 Strength bonus); SA spells; SD spells, earthwalking; MR 25%; SZ S (4' tall); ML avg (10); Int avg (10); AL N; XP 1,400 each.

Notes: *Strength Bonus*—Erdluitle have 18/50 strength, giving them a bonus of +1 on attack rolls and +3 on damage rolls. *Spells*—An erdluitle can cast *stone shape* and *stone tell* four times each day. A group of four erdluitle can cast *wall of stone* once per day. A group of eight erdluitle can cast *stone to flesh* once per day. All spells are cast as if by a 16th-level wizard. *Earthwalking*—Erdluitle have the natural ability to move through stone as if with a *passwall* spell.

Personality: Reclusive and territorial.

Special Equipment: Picks.

The first response of the erdluitle to an attack on the part of the player characters is swift and deadly. The erdluitle cast as many *stone to flesh* spells as possible, potentially petrifying their enemies. If none of the erdluitle are slain during the initial attack, the twenty-four of them can target three characters with this spell. Preference is given to those who initiated the hostilities or appear the most dangerous.

Ending the Skirmish: The erdluitle fight until their enemies are slain or they fail a morale check and flee. They have no interest whatsoever in prisoners. In the latter case, they use their earthwalking ability to phase through the ground in safety.

In most cases, the erdluitle do not return to attack a party that has driven them off once. They assume that such an encounter will lead only to another defeat. If the heroes take any of these creatures prisoner, however, the other erdluitle will return to free their friends.

Erdluitle Prisoners: If an erdluitle is taken prisoner, the heroes may be able to salvage the situation. Depending upon how they treat the prisoner, the heroes may be able to convince their captive that the confrontation was all a misunderstanding. If the heroes successfully convince the prisoner of this, the erdluitle leads them to others of its kind, and the adventure can continue as if the heroes had chosen "Conversation" over "Confrontation" at the start of this encounter.

If the prisoner is not convinced to trust the heroes, the erdluitle eventually attempt to rescue their kinsman. They use their powers to set up ambushes and employ creatures like sandlings, galeb duhr, and so forth to aid them. Given the strength of their allies and the advantage that this hostile environment gives them, it is almost certain that the heroes will eventually be destroyed if they do not hand over their prisoner(s).

Conversation

The erdluitle give the heroes a chance to explain their presence here before deciding how to deal with them. If the heroes behave in a civilized manner, abstaining from threats and that sort of thing, they have a good chance of gaining the erdluitle's trust for a time.

If the erdluitle are offended or believe that they are being insulted or tricked, they attack. This happens as described in the "Confrontation" section.

Should the heroes mention that they are either allies of Maeve or enemies of Loht, the erdluitle consider them friends. They have suffered much under the hand of the dark prince and live by the old adage: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Conversely, they think well of the White Lady, who forbade pursuit when they fled, and believe that any friend of hers is a friend of theirs.

By using their *stone tell* and other abilities, the erdluitle have learned many things about Loht and his plans. While they know that it is not possible for them to defeat the Prince of the Sith or his minions, they spy constantly upon them to see what they are up to and make sure that re-enslaving the erdluitle is not part of their agenda.

The Saugh: The erdluitle know that Loht has assembled a large army of undead creatures that he calls the saugh. They can tell the heroes that this unholy host contains both corporeal and incorporeal spirits. The former, they believe, guard the slopes of the Darkenheights. The latter haunt the Black Marsh.

Gwydion: The erdluitle are industrious spies and actually understand the heart of Loht's plan. They tell the heroes that the dark prince is attempting to gather the *Regalia of Arak* so that he may once again open the Obsidian Gate. Why he wishes to do this is beyond them—from what they've overheard, they believe he seeks to rescue his father, the long-dead Erlking. But the erdluite know that beyond that black portal lurks the sorcerer-fiend Gwydion, former master of the shadow elves and pech alike.

Once the gate is opened completely, they believe that no force can prevent Gwydion from coming into the Shadow Rift. Once he is here, he will certainly enslave them all again. This prospect

terrifies the erdluitle, but they see nothing that they can do about it.

Reaching the Obsidian Gate: The erdluitle can be of great help to the heroes in this matter. They know of a tunnel beneath the earth which leads the heroes from the Stowndowns directly to the Darkenheights. While this does not allow them to avoid the whole of the saugh, it does circumvent the Black Marsh and its many terrible inhabitants.

Crossing the Stowndowns

The difficulty of this voyage is directly dependent upon the relationship of the heroes and the erdluitle. If those folk are on friendly terms with the heroes, the journey is an easy one. If not, it may be difficult and dangerous.

Friendly Erdluitle

If the erdluitle have been befriended, they lead the heroes to the mouth of a wide tunnel. They explain that this passage leads beneath the Black Marsh and to the Darkenheights. While it is not entirely free of danger, it is far safer than overland travel.

If the heroes accept the offer of the erdluitle, then they can skip "Scene Thirteen: The Black Marsh" altogether and go directly to "Scene Fourteen: The Darkenheights." Dungeon Masters can either allow the heroes to travel through the tunnel without incident or add an encounter from the table in the next section to liven things up.

Neutral Erdluitle

If the heroes have driven off the erdluitle in battle and done nothing to further antagonize them (such as keeping prisoners), their passage is moderately difficult. Not only are they forced to travel overland, but they also have one or more encounters with the deadly creatures who live in the Stowndowns.

As the heroes cross these lands, the Dungeon Master should present them with one or two chances to meet the local wildlife. The following table can be used to determine the nature of such encounters. Dungeon Masters should also feel free to choose specific entries that seem well suited to the player characters or the general flow of the game. Unless otherwise indicated, these monsters are all listed in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Dungeon Masters should be careful with these encounters. The nature of a RAVENLOFT adventure does not lend itself well to the insertion of random encounters. As such, any encounter should be presented to the players as a sudden surprise. They should never be told the name of the creature or otherwise given information that would enable players to identify it. Dungeon Masters are invited to customize these monsters in order to make them less recognizable, adapting or altering their abilities to suit the Shadow Rift setting.

Table 11:
Stowndowns Encounters

Roll 1d12	Creature of Encounter
1	Elemental Kin, Earth, Crysmal[1]
2	Elemental Vermin, Earth (Crawler)[1]
3	Elemental, Earth Weird[1]
4	Elemental, Sandman[1]
5	Galeb Duhr
6	Gloomwing, Moth
7	Gloomwing, Tenebrous Worm
8	Hatori, Lesser
9	Sandling (Elemental, Earth Kin)
10	Snake, Stone[1]
11	Spirit, Rock, Thomil[2]
12	Xorn

[1] *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume I*
[2] *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume III*

Hostile Erdluitle

If the heroes have angered the erdluitle, they have a much more difficult time ahead of them. The most obvious way to do this is by keeping an erdluitle prisoner. Exceptionally imaginative players might find other ways to anger the natives of the Stowndowns. Individual Dungeon Masters must make that decision on a case-by-case basis.

Hostile erdluitle plan ambushes and stonework traps and otherwise lash out at the party. They place obstacles in the heroes' path through the use of their special abilities and persuade the other creatures of the region to strike at them as well.

As a rule, any group traveling across the Stowndowns with hostile erdluitle hunting them experiences encounters similar to those in the "Neutral Erdluitle" section. However, each encounter also includes 1d6 erdluitle, who lead the other creatures into battle.

The Shore

In time, the heroes reach the edges of the Black Marsh. At this point, the Dungeon Master must rid the party of any erdluitle prisoners, as they are of no further use in the adventure. These prisoners can be rescued, escape, or die raving from fear at the prospect of entering the Black Marsh. Powers checks may be in order in the latter case.

After this matter is dealt with, the adventure continues with either "Scene Thirteen: the Black Marsh" or "Scene Fourteen: The Darkenheights."

Scene Thirteen: The Black Marsh

There are more dead people than living. And their numbers are increasing. The living are getting rarer.
—Eugène Ionesco
Rhinoceros

The next stage in the adventure involves crossing the Black Marsh. This large quagmire occupies much of the eastern Shadow Rift and separates the Stowndowns from the Darkenheights.

The Black Marsh is dominated by the incorporeal undead. Characters who attempt to cross this place have to deal with these dangerous spirits as well as the natural hazards of the swamp.

Travel in the Black Marsh

Crossing the swamp is an extremely difficult feat. Within the Black Marsh, both dry land and open water are at a premium. Those without boats find themselves having to wade or swim through areas of murky, slimy water. Those with boats find themselves forced to portage over sections of mushy land and through areas of thick vegetation.

Movement

For the purposes of single-round movement rates, the Dungeon Master can save some time during play by making a few assumptions. As a rule, the terrain in the marsh varies between mucky ground and shoulder-deep water. On average, this cuts movement in half. The fact that it is also very dark in the Shadow Rift cuts this further, resulting in a general movement rate of one third normal—slow going, to say the least. Obviously, it is much more difficult to get through some regions than others, but this generalization serves for the most part.

For overland movement, as described in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, the Black Marsh is considered a marsh for purposes of terrain modifiers. This makes it very difficult to move through; an average unencumbered adventure will be able to slog through only about three exhausting miles per day.

Encounters

As the heroes make their way across the Black Marsh, the Dungeon Master should place a few of the following obstacles in their path. Some of these are natural, others are supernatural, but all are potentially deadly.

The choice of encounters should depend upon the actions of the party, their general composition, and the flow of the story. For example, if they fought the avanc in Lake Kronov, then the Dungeon Master might want to substitute snakes or quicksand for the crocodile encounter. If no clear choices present themselves, then the Dungeon Master can always just toss a die to see what the heroes come upon.

The number of creatures encountered should be selected by the Dungeon Master to provide a relatively tough fight for the party, though not so tough as to render them incapable of completing the adventure. If the heroes are clever and use a little ingenuity in the battle, they should be able to defeat these opponents without completely depleting their resources, but they should definitely feel exhausted and drained when they finally stagger out of the swamp.

Table 12:
Black Marsh Obstacles

1d6 Roll	Encounter
1	Deep Water
2	Crocodiles
3	Undead
4	Mists and Lights
5	Disgusting Leeches
6	Fish

The following sections fully detail the encounters given in **Table 12**.

Deep Water: As the party moves through the swamp, they come upon a stretch of muddy land covered by about six inches of water. This requires them to portage any watercraft they may be carrying.

After traveling some distance, they hit a place where the ground suddenly drops out from under them. The character leading the party is caught off guard and suddenly plunges beneath the surface.

As soon as the hero disappears beneath the water, he or she should make a saving throw vs. paralysis. Failure indicates that the character's leg is tangled in some underwater vegetation. Breaking free requires a successful bend bars/lift gates roll, although a sharp knife frees the limb in one round. Of course, heroes that come to the aid of the character must first make saving throws of their own or become entangled in turn.

This scene should be presented as a race against time, using the rules for drowning presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Because the hero did not have time to take a deep breath before being plunged into the depths, however, the ability to hold his or her breath is reduced. In addition, if the character had been running instead of moving along

cautiously when he or she plunged below the water, the survival time is further reduced.

Crocodiles: The Black Marsh is full of natural predators. Among the deadliest of these are the crocodiles who lurk here, always watching for something—or someone—to devour. A crocodile attack can occur any time the heroes are on land or wading through water. It is unlikely to happen while the heroes are in a boat.

Crocodile: AC 5; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 2 (bite/tail); Dmg 2d4/1d12; SA surprise; SZ L (8´–15´ long); ML avg (9); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 65.
Notes: *Surprise*—Victims suffer a –2 penalty on surprise rolls.
Personality: Hungry and vicious.

Crocodiles are solitary hunters, at least at first. As soon as one of them attacks, however, the fray is certain to attract others. A good rule of thumb is to begin the encounter with a strike by a single crocodile and then add 1d4 more such creatures each round for the next 1d4 rounds.

Undead: No trip through the Black Marsh would be complete without an encounter with the saugh, Loht's host of the undead. In this case, the Dungeon Master can roll on the following table to determine exactly what type of creature the characters come upon. Unless otherwise indicated, the creature is listed in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Table 13:
Saugh Encounters

Roll 1d20	Encounter
1–3	Banshee
4–5	Ghost
6	Radiant Spirit[1]
7–8	Rushlight[1]
9–12	Saugh, Gossamer[2]
13–15	Shadow (with maximum hit points)
16–17	Spectre
18	Spirit, Psionic[1]
19–20	Wraith

[1] *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*
[2] Appendix Four (in the back of this book)

All of the undead spirits encountered in the Black Marsh are members of the saugh. Unknown to Loht, their true master is Gwydion and they only do the Prince of Shadow's bidding because it suits their master's current purpose. None of these creatures will willingly act against their master, reveal his secrets, or otherwise betray his plans.

Mists and Lights: The Black Marsh is filled with all sorts of strange creatures, many of which appear as clouds of mist or flickering lights. These

inhuman creatures seek only to devour the living. The Dungeon Master can roll on **Table 14** to select an encounter or simply choose one of the results. These encounters can take place at any point during the crossing of the Marsh. Unless otherwise indicated, these monsters can be found in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Table 14:
Mist Encounters

Roll 1d20	Encounter
1–3	Mist, Crimson Death
4–6	Mist, Scarlet Dancer[3]
7–8	Mist, Vampiric
9–12	Nishruu[1]
13–15	Nyth[2]
16–20	Will-o'-Wisp

[1]*MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume One*
[2]*MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume Two*
[3]*MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume Three*

In the case of the mist creatures, they are all much darker than their normal descriptions indicate. Thus, they move in among the heroes before anyone realizes what is happening.

The spectral lights, on the other hand, may be visible at a distance. When the heroes first notice these creatures, the Dungeon Master should describe them as lanterns or torches, not as mysterious lights. The player characters should have no doubt that this is a normal encounter until it is too late.

Disgusting Leeches: Few creatures in the world are more disgusting to the average person than leeches. This is especially true in regions where leeches drain not only blood but also magical energies. At some point when the heroes are wading or swimming, the Dungeon Master can loose this encounter on them.

The Dungeon Master can roll on **Table 15** to determine the type of leech encountered or choose one of the results himself. Unless otherwise indicated, these monsters appear in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Table 15:
Leech Encounters

Roll 1d20	Encounter
1–10	Leech, Swarm
11–14	Leech, Giant
15–17	Worm, Rot Grub
18–19	Leech, Magical[1]
20	Leech, Psionic[1]

[1]*RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*

Any encounter with leeches should feature two themes. First, they should be discovered by accident after they have already begun to feed upon the party. This may require the Dungeon Master to do a little extra paperwork, tracking damage that the players are not yet aware of, but this trouble will be worth it when the horrible surprise is sprung. Obviously, this may be impossible with giant leeches.

Second, this encounter should play up the revolting nature of these creatures. Many people have an extreme fear of leeches and other such creatures. Consequently, the heroes may need to make fear or even horror checks when they encounter these disgusting creatures.

Fish: The Black Marsh is full of dangerous fish, many of which are more than brave enough to strike at a group of characters. An attack of this sort should be presented in such a way that the heroes do not know what is striking at them. After all, the water is murky at best, so it is almost impossible to spot the attacking fish; the player character will simply feel sharp teeth as the water begins to fill with blood. . . .

The best creatures for such an encounter are quippers (coldwater piranhas), sting rays, and electric eels, all of which are found under the "Fish" entry in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Leaving the Swamp

When the characters reach the point where the Darkenheights meets the Black Marsh, they will no doubt feel a sense of relief. After all, this will be the first dry land that they have stood on in some time.

As soon as the players decide that the time has come for them to begin the last stage of their journey, the Dungeon Master can spring one last encounter on them. Without warning, a series of tendrils lash out from the water.

Swamp Roper (1): AC 0; MV 3; HD 11; hp 64; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 5d4 (bite); SA strands, Strength drain; SZ L (9′ long); ML champion (15); Int low (16); AL CE; XP 7,000.

Notes: *Strands*—Swamp roper can shoot a total of 6 strands at opponents, each up to (1d4+1)×10 feet. If prey cannot break free, it is pulled 10 feet closer each round until it is close enough for the roper to use its bite attack (which automatically hits a held victim) Strands can be broken with a successful open doors roll. Each strand has a 0 Armor Class and 6 hit points. *Strength Drain*—Each time a strand hits, the victim must successfully save vs. poison or lose half its Strength (round down). Strength loss occurs 1d3 rounds after a hit, is cumulative for multiple hits, and lasts for 2d4 turns.

After the characters have defeated this creature, they are free to begin their ascent of the Darkenheights in "Scene Fourteen."

Scene Fourteen: The Darkenheights

Fain would I climb, yet fear I to fall.
—Sir Walter Ralegh
written on a window pane

If thy heart fails thee, climb not at all.
—Queen Elizabeth
in reply

In this scene, the characters must ascend the jagged slopes of the Darkenheights. This will allow them to reach the Obsidian Gate, where unbeknownst to them, all the powers of Loht stand against them. Nonetheless, to turn back now will result in the failure of their quest and eventual victory for Loht.

The Ascent

The Darkenheights is little more than a stone outcropping that juts upward from the Black Marsh near the southeastern end of the Shadow Rift. It rises nearly fifteen hundred feet above that dismal morass, although this still leaves it some one thousand feet below the rim of the Shadow Rift.

The heroes might reach the top of this jagged spire in a number of ways. When the heroes first lay eyes on the Darkenheights, read the following text to the players:

At first it was difficult to tell whether or not swamp fog was playing tricks with your eyes, but now you can see clearly. As the ground begins to grow firmer under your feet, and the stench of the swamp mercifully thins, the mists break up ahead, revealing a towering spire of black stone ahead of you. It erupts from the ground and stretches out of sight, into the dark clouds overhead, as if its peak might rise out of the Rift altogether. The jagged, nearly vertical sides of the obsidian monolith look like titanic shards of glass, melded together and covered with long razorlike edges, hundreds of feet long.

One slip while climbing titanic clif and you'd be sliced to ribbons, impaled upon a mountainous needle, or both.

Climbing

The most direct method of ascent is simple mountaineering. To be sure, the cliffs of the Darkenheights are not as treacherous as the precipice that separates the Greenlands from the Stowndowns. Still, when the heroes faced that challenge, they were able to rappel. Here, they are ascending and must battle gravity instead of employing it.

For the most part, the heroes need not actually scale the mountain. They can often proceed by hiking, climbing only where needed. In all cases, however, the terrain qualifies as rugged or rocky, which cuts the single-round movement rate of the average character in half. This is further affected by the darkness which constantly fills the Shadow Rift. As a rule, then, all characters ascending the Darkenheights have their base movement rates again reduced to one third normal.

As far as overland movement is concerned, the slopes of the Darkenheights are treated as high mountains. As such, unencumbered character will be able to travel roughly three miles a day. As with the journey through the Black Marsh, this is certainly slow going for the heroes, who should begin to fear they will arrive to late to stop Loht.

Sheer Cliffs: At least three times during the ascent of the Darkenheights, the characters come upon an area where they must scale a sheer surface if they are to continue. In order to resolve this situation, the Dungeon Master should use the rules presented in the "Time and Movement" section of the *Player's Handbook*.

In all cases, the climb is between sixty and one hundred eighty feet (6d3×10). The surface is rough, and there are a fair number of handholds, making the climb possible for those with thieving talents or the mountaineering proficiency. Such characters must make three successful rolls to complete the climb. Once on top, they can lower ropes and haul up characters unskilled at climbing.

Hazards of Climbing: The darkness of the Shadow Rift makes everything more dangerous for outsiders. Thus, if any climbing check fails, the character may have a mishap. Following a failed climbing check, the character involved in the ascent must attempt a saving throw vs. paralysis. Failure indicates that something has gone awry. Dungeon Masters can roll on **Table 16** to determine the exact problem that occurs or choose a result based on the actions of the hero.

Table 16:
Climbing Mishaps

Roll 1d6	Situation
1	Falling Rocks
2	Broken Lines
3	Wedged
4	Fear of Heights
5	Spiders
6	Bad Handhold

Falling Rocks—Dislodged rocks shower down on those below the climber. Victims must each make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 3d6 points of damage.

Broken Lines—A rope breaks, a piton comes loose, or the character loses his or her grip. For whatever reason, he or she now plummets to the ground below. Normal falling rolls apply, so the character suffers 1d6 points of damage per ten feet fallen (to a maximum of 20d6).

Wedged—The character has somehow gotten himself or herself stuck. Perhaps a foot is lodged in a crevice. In any event, it takes 1d6 rounds to get free, requiring an additional climbing roll each round. Others can help free the character, cutting the required time in half.

Fear of Heights—If the hero is a novice climber (that is, he or she does not have the mountaineering proficiency), he or she is overwhelmed by the situation. The character must immediately make a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If the check succeeds, he or she is merely frozen in place, effectively paralyzed until the character can be rescued or overcomes the fear in some way. Failure indicates that the character is overcome with vertigo and falls as in "Broken Lines."

Spiders—The character has stuck his or her hand into a nest of spiders. These creatures quickly begin to crawl all over the climber. Those who have a fear of these creatures should make fear checks (Dungeon Master's discretion).

In any case, the hero must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or be bitten by the arachnids. A bite injects type-A poison (injected, 10–30 minutes, 15/0 points). Removing the spiders takes 1d6 rounds. That time drops by half if someone assists the character.

Bad Handhold—The character has selected a bad place to anchor a rope, accidentally loosened a secured piton, or otherwise made the climb more hazardous for those following him or her. Any further climbing checks made by those traveling in the character's wake suffer a -25% penalty.

The Saugh: As the heroes climb the slopes, they encounter Loht's legion of corporeal undead. They should have at least two encounters with these creatures, each of which should push the adventurers to their limits. **Table 17** can determine the nature of the undead encounters. Unless otherwise indicated, these monsters can be found in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Table 17:
Saugh Encounters

Roll 1d20	Encounter
1	Banedead[2]
2	Baneguard[1]
3	Blazing Bones[1]
4	Crimson Bones[4]
5	Boneless[3]
6	Coffer Corpse[2]
7	Dread Warrior[2]
8	Ghoul
9	Ghoul, Ghast
10	Heucuva
11	Revenant
12	Saugh, Dearg-due[4]
13	Skeleton
14	Skeleton, Archer[3]
15	Skeleton, Strahd[3]
16	Son of Kyuss[2]
17	Wight
18	Zombie
19	Zombie, Cannibal[3]
20	Zombie, Strahd[3]

[1]*MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume One*
[2]*MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume Three*
[3]*RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*
[4]Appendix Four (in the back of this book)

The number of creatures encountered should be selected by the Dungeon Master to provide a relatively tough fight for the party, though not so tough as to render them incapable of completing the adventure. If the players are clever and use a little ingenuity in the battle, they should be able to defeat the saugh without completely depleting their resources.

Dungeon Masters who want to make the encounters more interesting can mix types of undead. This certainly increases the drama of the skirmish at the expense of requiring more work for the Dungeon Master. As a rule, no more than three types of undead should be encountered at any given time.

During these encounters, the Dungeon Master should take care not to call the undead by their

exact names. Anything that resembles a skeleton should simply be called a skeleton. Just about everything else on the chart can be called a zombie or ghoul. The Dungeon Master should let the heroes figure out exactly what it is they are facing for themselves. A little bit of the unknown enhances the drama of the encounter.

If the heroes are defeated by the saugh patrols, all is not lost. Failure should result in the characters losing the *Crown of Arak*, but if they are clever, they can still salvage triumph from this defeat.

Over the Top: Once the heroes have gotten past these hazards, they reach the plateau on which the Obsidian Gate stands. The adventure can now continue with "Scene Fifteen: The Obsidian Gate."

Magic

A number of magical spells and items can help overcome the challenges of the Darkenheights. Some obvious possibilities include using *spider climb* to scale the more dangerous portions. More esoteric options are described below.

Flying: Between spells like *fly* and magical items like a *carpet of flying*, a group of adventurers might fly to the top of the Darkenheights. Doing so, however, quickly draws the attention of Loht and his minions.

No matter what means of flight the characters employ, they are probably noticed and targeted for attack. At the very least, this costs them the element of surprise when they actually reach the Obsidian Gate. The only possible exception might be a group of flying characters who were also invisible.

Once spotted, a party of flying characters is attacked by a unit of Loht's personal guard, muryankin soldiers mounted on nightmares. There is one rider for every party member. This encounter should be difficult but not crippling for the heroes. Survivors should still be capable of successfully completing the adventure.

Nightmare (1 per hero): AC –4; MV 15, fly 36 (C); HD 6+6; hp 40 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 4d10/4d10/2d4 (hoof/hoof/teeth); SA burning hooves; SD choking cloud; SZ L (6′ at shoulder); ML elite (14); Int very (12); AL NE; XP 2,000 each.

Notes: *Burning Hooves*—A nightmare's burning hooves can set combustible material on fire. *Choking Cloud*—In battle, they emit a smoking cloud of brimstone that causes all within a 10′ radius to successfully save vs. paralyzation or suffer a –2 penalty on all attack and damage rolls.

Personality: Wild and cruel.

Muryankin Rider (1 per hero): AC 5; MV 12 (fly 36 while mounted on nightmare); HD 3+2; hp 26 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (spear); SA battle frenzy (+2 on attack and damage rolls); SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, riding skills; SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CN; XP 270 each.

Notes: *Riding Skills*—These changelings are specially trained in mounted combat, imposing a –2 penalty on any attack roll made at them while they ride their nightmares.

Personality: Chaotic and violent.

Special Equipment: Spears.

These riders attack in waves. On the first round of combat, half of the riders charge at the characters, attacking as they pass. During a pass, the nightmares may not bite but can still inflict two hoof attacks and exhale choking clouds. The riders are able to make normal spear attacks as they pass. On the second round, the remaining riders sweep in and attack while the others make a wide turn to prepare for their next run.

When half of the riders are eliminated, the remaining ones break formation and enter a general aerial melee. At this point, the battle becomes something of a dogfight.

If the heroes defeat these guards, they can land near the gate. At this point, the adventure continues with "Exploring the Darkness" in "Scene Fifteen: The Obsidian Gate."

Teleporting: More direct magical means of ascent include such options as *teleport* or *dimension door* spell. Such methods of travel have many advantages, the most important of which is the almost certain surprise of those within the structure around the Obsidian Gate.

It is not possible, however, to appear within one hundred yards of the gate itself. This portal warps the fabric of time and space so greatly that all such spells are instantly halted, dumping their passengers near, but not right on top of, the gate. Still, this is much easier than scaling the cliffs or having to fight through the nightmare riders. Those who teleport to the Darkenheights can go directly to "Exploring the Darkness" in "Scene Fifteen: The Obsidian Gate."

Reaching New Heights

When all is said and done, the adventure is ready to conclude. In most cases, this means that the Dungeon Master should continue on with "Scene Fifteen: The Obsidian Gate."

Scene Fifteen: The Obsidian Gate

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow.

—T. S. Eliot
The Hollow Men

After the heroes scale the Darkenheights, they come upon the plateau at its peak, a flat expanse of broken stone almost totally free of vegetation. At its center is a great dome of what appears to be gleaming blackness. In actuality, this is the aura of shadows that always surrounds the Obsidian Gate. If the heroes are to triumph over Loht, they must enter this darkness.

This scene has many possible outcomes. Somehow, probably during a battle with either Loht or Gwydion, the heroes should toss the *Crown of Arak* (or one of the other parts of the regalia) into the Obsidian Gate.

If all goes well, this act ends the adventure. As always, players who act without thinking and rely upon the good graces of the Dungeon Master to see their characters through this scene are asking for trouble. If the heroes do not act quickly, Loht may well succeed in opening the Obsidian Gate and allowing Gwydion to enter the Shadow Rift—a move that could prove devastating to much of Ravenloft.

Crossing the Plateau

Assuming that the party reached the plateau without being seen by Loht or his minions, they now face the daunting task of crossing a final expanse of open terrain. The Dungeon Master can read the following narrative to describe what the heroes see from the edge of the plateau:

From where you stand it looks as if the top of this stone mountain has been sheared off by some giant blade. An expanse of raw stone roughly one thousand yards in diameter spreads out before you. At the center of this jagged, broken plane is a hemisphere of absolute darkness some one hundred yards across. Even in this land of twilight, its pitch-blackness stands out from the surrounding gloom.

If the heroes take a few minutes to look around before moving out onto the plain, they see Loht's nightmare riders circling above the plateau. Against the darkness of the Shadow Rift it may not be possible to make out exactly what they are. In all likelihood, the heroes can make out only the circling trails of the flaming hooves. Still, this should warn them that someone or something is watching for intruders.

If Loht has already acquired the *Crown of Arak*, he wants to keep the heroes from reaching the Obsidian Gate and interfering with his plans. If the heroes opt to move across the plateau without doing something to prevent being spotted by the nightmare riders, they are attacked. (See page 107 for the riders' combat statistics.)

If the heroes have either kept the *Crown of Arak*, found some means of avoiding detection, or defeated the riders, they pass unmolested. The adventure then continues with "Exploring the Darkness."

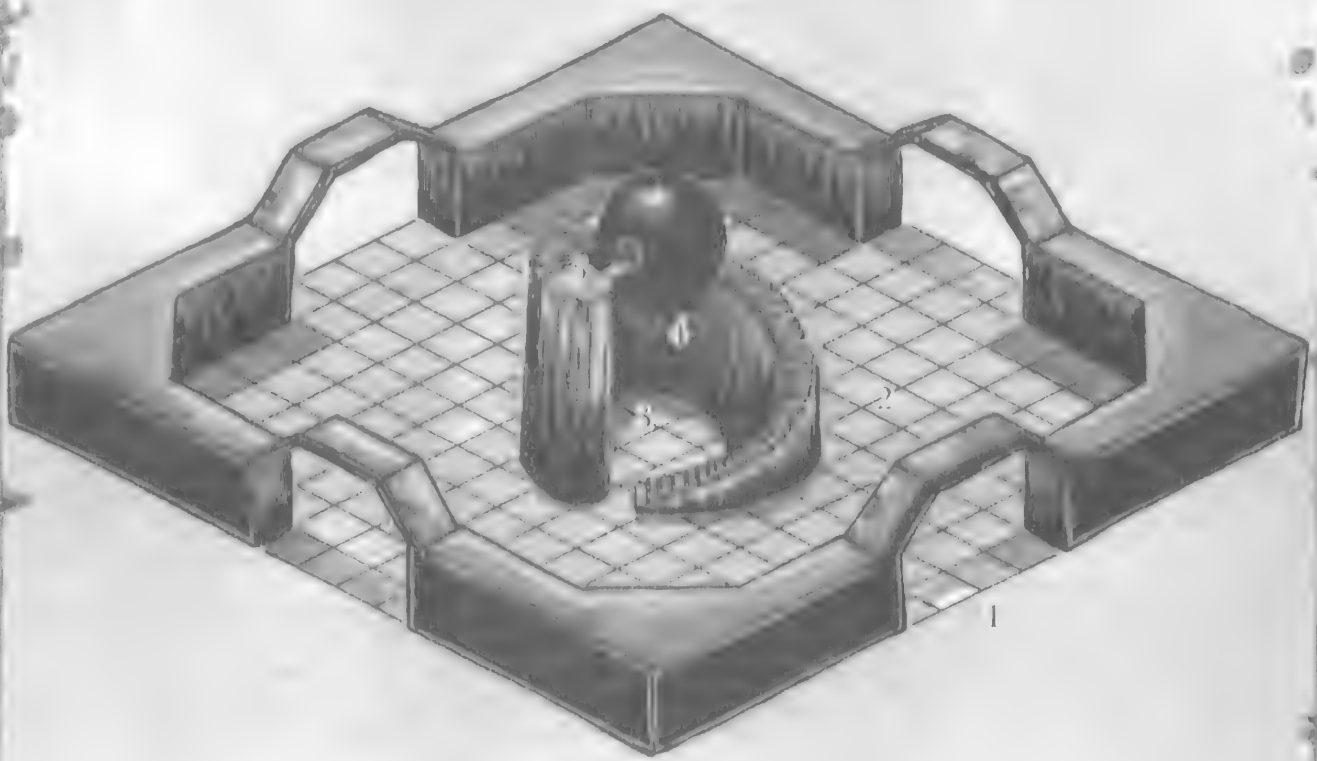
Exploring the Darkness

The Obsidian Gate radiates a powerful magical aura of shadowstuff with a radius of one hundred yards. This aura is spherical and cannot be blocked by any material, so it reaches well into the air and extends deep into the earth. It is this darkness that the heroes saw at the center of the plateau.

This sphere is specifically intended to protect the Obsidian Gate from sunlight (just in case the Mists above were ever to part). As such, the thick exterior of the aboveground hemisphere is completely opaque, allowing no light in or out. Within this outer barrier of shadowstuff, no magical spell or other means can create light brighter than that of a candle. Even powerful magical items like a *sun blade* shed only the faintest of glows in this place. Further, magical effects associated with such radiances cease to function. Thus, a character may command his or her *gem of brightness* to throw out its blinding ray, but that beam still ends up no brighter than a candle and has no effect on its target. This use still expends the charge used to activate that power, however. This magical aura also affects creatures with especially keen vision. Powers like infravision fail to operate within this aura. The darkness negates magically based senses, like those created by a *wizard eye* or a *ring of x-ray vision*.

Exploring this place is going to be time consuming and very risky, for the heroes are never sure what is more than a few inches away from

The Obsidian Gate



One square = 15 feet

them in any direction. Much of their examination of this area must be done slowly and with outstretched hands. The more claustrophobic and suffocating the darkness around the Obsidian Gate can be made to feel, the better.

No actual danger awaits the heroes within this layer of blackness, but that does not mean the area is completely empty. The barrier between the Demiplanes of Dread and Shadow stretches extremely thin in this area, allowing tentative contact between creatures from both sides. The Dungeon Master should do his best to build on their feelings of dread as the heroes pass through the darkened outer layer of the sphere. They may "feel" the brush of a hand or the scratch of a claw as they grope about. Darkness notwithstanding, the characters may even "see" shadows slink and slither around them in their mind's eye.

The blackness of this sphere slowly begins to fade toward the center (near the Obsidian Gate). By the time the heroes reach the structure surrounding the gate, the darkness will have lightened to a shadowy gray.

The Heart of Darkness

Within the aura of darkness, the heroes come upon a structure of gleaming black marble with a tower that rises high into the air. Floating above this tower is the Obsidian Gate itself. However, it is difficult to see the whole edifice through the protective shadows that permeate the area.

Loht awaits the heroes on the bridge to the huge orb. If he has failed to retrieve the *Crown of Arak* from them, he plans to open the gate without actually having the item in his possession. Once the crown is brought near the gate (which the heroes will inevitably do), he can still attempt to open the portal. Thus, he has instructed his minions to allow the heroes to approach the Obsidian Gate, though no closer than the staircase.

If he already possesses the *Crown of Arak*, the Prince of Shadows is currently preparing to open the gate. In this case, his minions are instructed keep the heroes away from Loht and the Obsidian Gate at all costs, attacking them as soon as they enter the courtyard. Thus, two dearg-due guard each archway and will rush to each other's aid when the heroes approach.

At the very least, the battle with the dearg-due should delay the heroes long enough for Loht to open the gate before they reach the top of the stairs. Naturally, Loht's undead minions hope to destroy the heroes, but their master has not had the time to summon enough of them to succeed in this.

Saugh, Dearg-Due (8): AC 8; MV 12; HD 5; hp 29 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (headman's axe); SA choking cloud; SD special immunities; SW cold iron; SZ M (6′ tall); ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL NE; XP 650 each.

Notes: *Choking Cloud*—If a dearg-due is successfully hit, a foul mist boils out of the wound. The attacker must successfully save vs. breath weapon or suffer damage equal to half the amount inflicted on the creature. *Special Immunities*—Dearg-due are immune to disease, toxins, *charm, sleep, hold,* and other life- and mind-affecting spells. *Cold Iron*—Cold iron inflicts double damage on dearg-due.

Personality: Vicious and unrelenting.

The map on page 109 can be used in conjunction with the following key to resolve the exploration of this part of the plateau. The boxed text does not describe Loht's minions who await the heroes, since their presence is contingent upon possession of the crown.

1. Eternal Darkness

By the time the heroes approach the archway, the darkness has significantly lessened, allowing them to see about ten or fifteen feet ahead. Still, in order to protect the Obsidian Gate itself, this area severely lessens the effects of magical light. Thus, *sun blades* and *light* spells still do not function fully, radiating only a ghostly glow.

Almost lost in the swirling shadows, they can make out the shape of a stone arch set into a wall of polished obsidian. In the swirling grayness beyond this portal they can dimly make out what looks like a giant tower.

As the map shows, there are four ways to enter the courtyard (area 2) from this region. None is different from the others. Once the heroes step through an archway, they stand on the glass floor of the courtyard that surrounds the staircase.

2. Courtyard

A sheet of slippery, black glass makes up the floor of this mysterious structure. From here, the heroes can make out some sort of tower looming before them and a huge sphere of darkness floating above it.

As soon as the heroes enter the courtyard, the *Crown of Arak* is close enough for Loht to begin the ritual necessary to open the Obsidian Gate. Thus, they are greeted with a sudden, eerie chanting. When the Prince of Shadows begins his chanting, the *Crown of Arak* begins to pull toward him. Whoever is carrying the crown can feel a slight tug as the item tries to respond to the magical incantation and draw nearer to Loht (though the bearer may think it is pulling toward the gate).

In general, casting the spell should take Loht at least long enough for the heroes to begin climbing the staircase. Even if the Prince of Shadows already possesses the crown, the heroes still arrive just as he is beginning the ritual. However, they will probably have a more difficult time reaching him due to the more determined intervention of the dearg-due.

When Loht actually opens the gate, the heroes should be just close enough to witness Gwydion pushing through the planar membrane between the two demiplanes.

3. Center

From here, a winding staircase constructed of solid, black stone surrounds the heroes. At the top of this forbidding structure floats an orb of absolute darkness. They can also see a wide, flat bridge of some kind connecting the black orb to the top of the staircase.

If they enter this area, they should hear Loht's chanting grow much louder, hopefully convincing them that they must hurry if they are to stop him from opening the gate. If necessary, more dearg-due could also approach to hurry them along.

4. Staircase

If the heroes carry the *Crown of Arak*, Loht's dearg-due minions lie in wait for the heroes on the staircase, hidden in shadows. As soon as the heroes begin ascending the staircase, these undead monsters strike.

These stairs wind high into the air, circling the center of the structure. The steps seem to have been carved from a single piece of polished obsidian. Tall, thick candles line the outer edge of the staircase, spreading their unnaturally muffled light along the steps (heroes who are having too easy a time of it may, optionally, encounter a few sith left in the shadows on the stairs to slow them down).

By the light of these candles, the heroes can make out an immense globe of black nothingness hovering above the center of the terrace. A ramp leads directly into the center of the orb from a platform on the south side of the ring.

About the time the heroes reach the center of the staircase, the Dungeon Master should read the following text aloud to the players:

A lone figure stands on the bridge, making graceful passes in front of the black orb. You hear the sound of his chanting, unhurried and triumphant. Then, another voice joins in—a strange, booming voice that seems to come from the giant sphere itself!

As the heroes approach the top of the staircase, they see Loht complete his ritual and open the Obsidian Gate (with the results described on page 113). Even if they use spells or missile weapons, the heroes should have no real chance of stopping him in time.

5. Ramp

A ring of tall, thick candles on the landing and on the bridge provide faint, yellow illumination over this area. When the heroes approach the bridge, the Dungeon Master should read the following text to the players:

A tall, chanting shadow elf stands on a wide bridge between the landing and the immense black globe. He is clad in a myriad of strange but impressive regalia. Ripples roll outward on the surface of this mysterious sphere, like waves on a jet-black pond, sending powerful shivers down your spine. The two voices now reach a fervored peak, vibrating the very stone beneath you with their rumbling chant.

As soon as one of the heroes reaches the actual bridge itself, Loht completes the incantation Calling out "Come, Arak! Come, Erlking! Come, Father! Your son awaits you!" He falls silent and turns triumphantly to face the heroes.

The Shadow Prince is encased in a *globe of invulnerability* by the *Sword of Arak*. So shielded, he can all but ignores the heroes' magical assaults. If they are able to pierce Loht's defenses, however, they catch the darklord completely by surprise. If they engage him in melee, the Prince of Shadows proves a deadly enemy. He now has all the powers of the *Sword of Arak*, the *Regalia of Arak* (assuming he has the *Crown of Arak*) and his own abilities as both a sith and a lord of the fey. Characters who encountered him in the adventure *Servants of Darkness* might be disconcerted to find that this elegant shadow elf is a much deadlier foe here in the heart of his own domain.

Loht's favored tactics include using the domination ability of the *Sword of Arak* and the influence of the *Crown of Arak* (if he possesses the item) to sow dissention in the party and turn the adventurers against each other. Meanwhile, during the battle, the Obsidian Gate opens behind him; continue the adventure with "Gwydion Strikes!" below.

If the heroes try to throw the *Crown of Arak* (or one of the other artifacts) into any part of the Obsidian Gate other than where the ramp from area 5

touches it, the object simply bounces off. If this happens, the crown has a 20% chance of passing near enough to the bridge for Loht to snatch it from the air.

Another option might be for the heroes to somehow shove or hurl Loht himself into the Obsidian Gate. This can result in a very dramatic ending that will be remembered by the heroes for a long time to come. The gate carries the darklord into the Demiplane of Shadow, where he engages Gwydion in an epic but ultimately futile battle as the items of the *Regalia of Arak* are one by one swept out of existence.

Gwydion Strikes!

While Loht has been busy delaying the player characters, important events have been taking place behind him. Read the following text aloud to the players at this point:

Behind the prince, a small circle of radiance begins to spread across the ebon surface of the black sphere. Suddenly, a monstrous gray tentacle and a long arm with a many-fingered hand snake out of the circle of glowing light and snatch the Arak from the bridge. A deep, menacing voice emanates from the Gate. "Your help is much appreciated, Loht. Now, here is your reward."

With that, the serpentine limb squeezes the dangling shadow elf prince, clutching him so tightly that you hear the sound of crunching bones. Loht lets out a cry of pain and strikes downward with the upheld Sword of Arak, *slicing deep into the serpentine limb.*

The entire gate seems to shudder as the huge tentacle recoils, dropping the shadow elf, who falls silently toward the ground far below

Despite appearances, Loht is not killed by the fall, having shifted to shadow-form on the way down. However, he is permanently crippled by Gwydion's attack and thereafter can move only in shadow-form, otherwise remaining in helpless agony.

Closing the Gate

With Loht out of the picture, the heroes must contend with Gwydion in order to complete their mission. All Loht's undead minions rush to the top of the staircase to aid their true master, so the heroes have only a short time to focus all of their attentions on the sorcerer-fiend as he attempts to push his way into the Demiplane of Dread. Their success in throwing the *Crown of Arak* (or any other portion of the regalia) is left up to the Dungeon Master. This task should not be accomplished too easily, as Gwydion will do everything within his power to stop them. When the gate closes, the heroes should feel like they have achieved victory within a hair's breath of utter defeat.

Even though the Obsidian Gate is wide open, it still takes time for a creature of Gwydion's size and power to push all the way through the membrane between the two demiplanes. Different parts of Gwydion come through the Gate at a rate determined by the Dungeon Master. If the heroes seem to be on the right track and look like they could handle a bit more of a challenge, Gwydion should come through faster—perhaps at a rate of three parts every two rounds. However, if the heroes seem to be having quite a bit of trouble and could not handle too much resistance, Gwydion could come through the gate much more slowly—perhaps at a rate of one part every two or three rounds.

Gwydion is a malevolent being of incredible evil and power. Obviously, the heroes would not normally have a chance to defeat a creature who is powerful enough to enslave an entire race as potent as the shadow elves. Luckily, Gwydion cannot use the entirety of his powers against them while he is crossing dimensions. The heroes will probably have to deal with only a few parts of Gwydion to successfully reseal the gate and save the Arak (and themselves) from an eternity of misery and servitude.

Each of Gwydion's parts acts as a separate creature. If one of the parts is destroyed, the others are seemingly unaffected. Also, this chaotic evil being does not need to make morale checks; he does not fear the heroes, puny creatures that they are, and is not about to draw back on the verge of consummating a plan millennia in the making.

As a creature of shadows, Gwydion is especially vulnerable to light. Thus, while the effects of magical light are lessened here, Gwydion still suffers double damage from a *sun blade* or other such weapon. Also, if a *light* spell of any kind is cast on one of Gwydion's limbs, it suffers a +2 Armor Class penalty (although this does not affect any of his other parts).

Gwydion's Tentacle: AC 4 (thick hide); MV 12; HD 5; hp 10 (remaining after Loht's attack); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA constrict; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; spell immunities; SW fire; MR nil; SZ H; XP 650.

Notes: *Constrict*—After the tentacle successfully strikes an opponent, it inflicts an additional 2d10 points of damage each round thereafter unless it is loosened or severed. Any creature with an 18/20 Strength or greater can loosen the tentacle with a successful Strength check. *Spell Immunities*—The tentacle is immune to *hold, sleep, charm,* and other mind-affecting spells. *Fire*—The tentacle suffers double damage from fire-based attacks.

Gwydion's Thirteen-Fingered Hand: AC 1 (Dexterity); MV 18; HD 6+4; hp 52; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by spell; SA spells; SD +2 or better magical weapon to hit, spell immunities; MR 60%; SZ S; XP 3,000.

Notes: *Spells*—Each round, the hand can cast one spell (as a 15th-level mage). Each spell originates from a different finger, so if the finger is destroyed, the hand can no longer cast the corresponding spell. Any finger that directly suffers 4 or more points of damage is destroyed. *Spell Immunities*—The hand is immune to *hold, sleep, charm,* and other mind-affecting spells.

Spells: 1st—*charm person, chill touch, sleep;* 2nd—*darkness 15' radius*, ray of enfeeblement;* 3rd—*hold person, vampiric touch;* 4th—*ice storm, fear;* 5th—*domination;* 6th—*repulsion, shades*;* 7th—*power word stun.*

*The effects of these spells double in the Shadow Rift.

Gwydion's Talon: AC 2 (scales); MV 12; HD 7; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (claws); SA poison; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, spell immunities; MR 20%; SZ M; XP 2,000.

Notes: *Poison*—Opponent struck by the talon must successfully save vs. poison or begin to weaken. Each round after the attack, the victim's Strength and Constitution drop one point. If either score reaches 0, the character falls unconscious. If the character is not treated within 12 hours, he dies. *Spell Immunities*—The talon is immune to *hold, sleep, charm,* and other mind-affecting spells.

Gwydion's Cloven Hoof: AC 8; MV 8; HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA earthquake; SD spell immunities; SW silver; SZ M; XP 270.

Notes: *Earthquake*—Once per round, the hoof can strike the ground, causing it to shake violently. All creatures within 30 yards must make a successful Dexterity check or fall to the ground, dropping any items held in their hands and losing all actions for the rest of the round. *Spell Immunities*—The hoof is immune to *hold, sleep, charm,* and other mind-affecting spells. *Silver*—Silver weapons inflict double damage on the hoof.

Gwydion's Smashing Fist: AC 6; MV 12; HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4 (punch); SA smash; SD spell immunities; SZ M; XP 1,400.

Notes: *Smash*—On a natural roll of 19 or 20, the fist picks up his opponent and smashes him to the ground, inflicting 4d6 points of damage. Each round thereafter, the fist smashes the character again until the victim makes a successful Strength check with a –4 penalty to break free. *Spell Immunities*—The hand is immune to *hold, sleep, charm,* and other mind-affecting spells.

Gwydion's Spiked Tail: AC 0; MV 24; HD 7; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4; SA poison; SD +2 or better magical weapon to hit, spell immunities; MR 35%; SZ H; XP 3,000.

Notes: *Poison*—On a successful hit, the tail injects poison into its victim. The victim must successfully save vs. paralyzation or be unable to move for 2d4 rounds. *Spell Immunities*—The tail is immune to *hold, sleep, charm,* and other mind-affecting spells.

Gwydion's Withering Eye: AC 1; MV fly 8; HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA spells; SD +3 or better magical weapon to hit; SW light; MR 75%; SZ S; XP 3,000.

Notes: *Spells*—Each round, the eye can cast one spell as a 16th-level cleric. *Light*—If a *light* or *continual light* spell is cast on the eye, it is blinded and can no longer cast spells (until it is somehow rid of the light).

Spells: 2nd—*charm person or mammal, hold person;* 5th—*flame strike;* 6th—*blade barrier, wall of thorns;* 7th—*earthquake, fire storm.*

To close the Obsidian Gate, the heroes need to toss either the *Crown of Arak*, the *Sword of Arak*, or some other portion of the *Regalia of Arak* into it. If a hero merely attempts to throw the crown from a distance, Gwydion will certainly catch it, taunting the heroes by saying "No piece of the *Regalia of Arak* will pass this gate! You shall not rid yourselves of me so easily!"

Whoever is going to put the crown (or any other part of the regalia) into the gate must approach within four or five feet of the opening, thus placing himself or herself in perilous proximity to the shadow fiend himself. Obviously, if any hero attempts to do this, Gwydion will immediately try to destroy him or her. The Dungeon Master should make things very difficult for them but by no means impossible.

A truly heroic character may even attempt a flying leap into the Obsidian Gate, carrying the *Crown of Arak* into the Demiplane of Shadow. Certainly, this is a truly fitting end for any good hero! The shadow elves will probably erect a small memorial in his or her honor.

As soon as one of the aforementioned items is thrown into the gate, the circle of light through which Gwydion is entering begins to close. This can happen either quickly or over the course of several rounds, depending on the whim of the Dungeon Master. Either way, as the gate closes, the parts of Gwydion that have crossed into the Shadow Rift struggle to retreat, but to no avail. They are sliced off by the suddenly-contracting membrane and left to writhe on the ground before the heroes. When the gate completely closes, they are rendered still and lifeless, good for nothing but a necromancer's experiments.

Characters who have been carrying the *Eye of Vhaeraun* ever since the events of *Servants of Darkness* may cast that cursed item through the gate as well before it closes. As the item sails through the air, any heroes still in its thrall may jump wildly after it, but the instant it touches the portal they will see its true state revealed as it disappears into the darkness.

At this point, the heroes have completed their task. "Scene Sixteen: Denouement" describes most of the possible outcomes of this adventure.

Scene Sixteen: Denouement

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
—Matthew 6:34

The future of the Shadow Rift lies in the hands of the heroes. With all the possible outcomes to the previous scene, it is difficult to determine its overall effects on both the player and nonplayer characters.

Rulership of the Rift

Depending upon their success in this adventure, the heroes help determine who holds the ultimate power in this realm of eternal night.

Loht

If the heroes manage to throw the *Crown of Arak* or one of the other components of the regalia into the Obsidian Gate or defeat Loht in battle before he can open the Gate, they have successfully completed their mission.

Loht Dead: Should the heroes have somehow propelled the Prince of Shadows through the Obsidian Gate into the Dimension of Shadows, he quickly perishes as his father did before him in battle with the great shadow-fiend. Without him, the Unseelie Court fragments. Malinda, Princess of the Powrie, attempts to claim the lordship but for all practical purposes the Unseelie Court ceases to exist.

If Loht dies within the Obsidian Gate, read the following boxed text to the players:

Just before the ebon sphere of the Gate collapsed upon itself completely, an anguished scream pierces its threshold and crawls down your spine, as Loht's life and reign are utterly crushed by the creature he expected to be his father. In response, the surviving shadow elves and their minions all around you wail in rage, disbelief, and defeat. For a moment, it seems they might try to butcher you in their fury, but some of them simply fall to the ground, dying of their own despair, while others turn and sullenly leave the scene, fading into the fog.

Loht Defeated: Crippled in body and spirit, the Shadow Prince makes his way painfully back to the Malachite Palace. Once there, he withdraws into a haze of pain and bitter self-reproach. He will certainly not remember the heroes with fondness, but neither will he send assassins after them. The Unseelie Court survives but goes into eclipse, with the Seelie Court in ascendance over most of the Shadow Rift. Within a few years, Loht starts send forth sith and others on missions, and legends begin to circulate in the lands, of a search to find great healers and potent artifacts that might ease his suffering or restore the health of the Crippled King.

If the heroes successfully close the gate and Loht is still alive, read the following boxed text:

When the ebon sphere of the Gate is collapsed and gone, silence falls over the battlefield. Loht's troops falter and give up the fight, and all eyes turn toward their fallen general's shadowy form. After a few labored breaths, he lifts his eyes toward you and hisses through his teeth.

"Behold an immortal fool! Behold the Crippled King, son of a long-lost hero, fallen far beyond death! Touch me not, meddlers, unless you mean to end my sorrows by ending my life. You can harm me no more."

Several shadow elves approach with a pallet, to grimly bear their leader back to the Malachite Palace.

Loht Triumphant: If Loht succeeds in opening the gate and allowing Gwydion through, the sorcerer-fiend makes the foolish sith-prince his first victim. However, the crippled Loht refuses to submit to the triumphant darklord and organizes an effective underground from the remnants of the Unseelie Court (his sith and sithkin plus whatever muryan, powrie, and teg escape Gwydion's onslaught). This shadow-court guerilla movement may be based either in the Shadow Rift or in scattered pockets throughout the surrounding domains, providing hooks for later adventures.

If the heroes fail to close the gate, read or paraphrase the following boxed text aloud to the players:

Gwidion towers over you, exultant, and surveys the scene. He looks down at Loht shadowy form, lying in a heap at his cloven feet, and laughs sadistically. "Shall I finish bestowing my reward upon you, traitor's spawn? I think not yet. Not too quickly." His eyes scan the misty vista again, and he asks, "What brave new world is this? I sense a place awaits me here. I must lay claim to my power across the land!" With that, he strides forth and disappears into the mists beyond.

Loht's troops falter and give up the fight, and all eyes turn toward their fallen general's shadowy form. After a few labored breaths, he lifts his eyes toward you and hisses through his teeth.

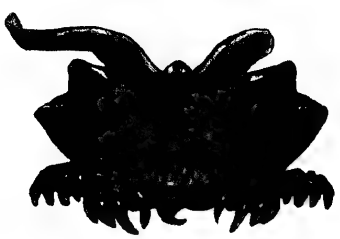
"Behold an immortal fool! Behold the Crippled King, son of a long-lost hero, fallen far beyond death! Touch me not, meddlers, unless you mean to end my sorrows by ending my life. You can harm me no more."

Loht's minions, now Gwidion's, close upon you. . . .

Gwydion

If the Obsidian Gate is opened and the heroes do not immediately throw in some part of the *Regalia of Arak* to reseal it, Gwydion comes through it with a roar of supernatural power and fury. In the wake of his arrival, the staircase over which the gate floats is shattered (inflicting a huge amount of damage on anyone left standing on it), and the mountain beneath it rocked by a terrible earthquake.

Gwydion ignores the heroes (puny things that they are), as he sets out at once to explore this new realm and once again enslave all the shadow elves—"Arak" no more. He leaves it to his minions to deal with the player characters, and they are pursued all the way back to the Fracture by both saugh and malign shadow-creatures of every possible description. Areas previously eerie are now positively tainted, as Gwydion's evil spreads rapidly throughout the land. The Dungeon Master should pull out all the stops and give the heroes a chance for the most heroic retreat possible. If they are in immediate danger of being completely wiped out, allies of Maeve might meet up with them along the way, or the erdluitle of the Stowndowns might prove helpful. Still, this should be a deadly chase.



As for Gwydion, he amuses himself for a time with subjugating and enslaving the shadow elves and exploring his new realm. While he cannot leave the Shadow Rift, it is a much more commodious prison than the one he has occupied for the last five thousand years. Ever a patient villain, he begins drawing up plans for escaping the Rift in order to rampage through the Core at some far distant date. In the meantime, he sends powrie assassins and other dark fey to harass the lands surrounding his borders. Only the escape of Maeve (see below) casts a shadow across his triumph.

Maeve

If Gwydion has been prevented from fully entering Ravenloft, Maeve returns to the Shadow Rift and resumes her role as the Faerie Queen. She graciously rewards the heroes who made this possible by any means in her power, including restoring the folk of Briggdarrow to their former selves (unless, of course, any of their changelings were slain by the heroes, in which case nothing can be done for them). Should any of the heroes have particularly distinguished himself during the battle with Gwydion, she may approach that character privately to see if he might be interested in becoming her new mortal lover (a temporary arrangement, only lasting a century or so). At any rate, the heroes are allowed to stay or depart, as they choose. Any who were transformed into changelings are restored.

If, on the other hand, Gwydion emerges triumphant from the Obsidian Gate, casting down Loht in his hour of glory, Maeve puts into effect a plan of her own that she has been perfecting all these months, away from prying eyes. She leads a great exodus of her people to the Obsidian Gate and takes them through, back into the demiplane from which they had originally fled. Before the gate closes once again, this time forever, most of the non-evil fey will have departed. Of those that remain, some submit to Gwydion, others join with Loht, and many flee to other lands. The Shadow Rift itself is left an emptier and more sinister place, while the rest of Ravenloft has a sudden influx of the fey, making the lands of the Core yet stranger.

Perhaps this is exactly what the dark powers had in mind all along.

Lead me from the unreal to the real!
Lead me from darkness to light!
Lead me from death to immortality
—*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

Appendix One
The Shadow Rift

The Domain

Those who dwell in the domains of the northern Core think of the Shadow Rift as a fissure that runs along a southeast path from the southern border of Necropolis to the northern reaches of Barovia. It was formed in the wake of the Grand Conjunction without any apparent cause and, as such, remains a place of mystery to this day.

The Land

The Shadow Rift is a wasp-waisted chasm that runs from the southern border of Necropolis southward between Keening and Falkovnia. It hugs the border of Tepest, turning eastward and finally ending on the western fringes of Nova Vaasa. Along the way it brushes the edge of Borca and forms the northern frontier of Barovia.

From north to south, the Shadow Rift measures just over sixty miles in length. At its widest points, from Borca to Nova Vaasa in the south and from Falkovnia to Keening in the north, it spans some twenty-five miles. At its narrowest point, from Falkovnia to Tepest, it measures less than ten miles across.

The exact depth of the Shadow Rift remains a subject of much debate. Although it looks very much like a mist-filled chasm from the top of its sheer walls, the Rift is not a mere canyon or gorge. In truth, it represents an imperfection in the fabric of the demiplane. While the Mists of Ravenloft enfold the Shadow Rift, it is almost impossible to measure its actual depth.

Should the Mists ever part, however, the barrier which separates the Rift from the rest of Ravenloft would vanish. If that were to happen, the realm of the Arak would almost certainly anchor itself into place, much like the final piece in a jigsaw puzzle. When that happens, the average depth of the Shadow Rift will probably range between fifteen hundred and three thousand feet.

The geography of the Shadow Rift must be defined in two ways. The first, which is known as "Apparent Geography," refers to the shape of the Rift and its features as perceived by those in the Core. The Grand Cascade, where the Blackmist River plunges off the cliffs of southern Tepest, is an example of "Apparent Geography." The second, and arguably more important, description of this realm is referred to as "Actual Geography." This refers to the land itself as it appears beneath the swirling Mists. The Black Marsh, which exists where the Grand Cascade splashes to earth after its great descent, is an example of "Actual Geography."

Apparent Geography

When viewed from its bordering domains, the Shadow Rift appears to be nothing more than a great precipice, much too wide to see across, falling into unknown depths. After some two hundred feet of vertical descent, these stone cliffs bury themselves in an intangible yet seemingly impregnable layer of churning vapor. What lies within or below those rolling clouds has been a subject of great debate for many years.

The Cascades: Perhaps the most impressive features of these cliffs are the two great waterfalls that plummet down into the abyss. These falls are beautiful and wondrous but offer no means of actually entering the Rift. While the water somehow passes through the border of the Shadow Rift, nothing else passes through the Mists without fading out of existence.

The northernmost of these waterfalls is known as the Hidden Cascade, on which no human has ever sailed. The reason for this is simple enough: The Hidden Cascade is born of an underground river that flows from somewhere beneath Lake Kronov. This waterfall explodes from the cliff face roughly halfway between the rim above and the roiling Mists below (i.e., about one hundred feet down).

The second of these waterfalls, which is known as the Great Cascade, is located on Tepest's southern border. It marks the death of the Blackmist River, which flows south out of Lake Kronov and then vanishes into the Shadow Rift.

The Descent: Over the years since it was formed, more than a few hapless adventurers have tried to make their way into the depths of the Shadow Rift. Without exception, they were never seen again. Most, it is certain, were simply consumed by the misty barrier of that realm before they realized their peril. Others may have completed their journey, only to fall victim to the many perils of the Shadow Rift itself.

The only serious attempt to breach the borders of the Shadow Rift occurred in the domain of Tepest. Eager to learn what might exist beyond the endless cloud cover of the Rift, a young noble named Trevor McClour commissioned a staircase, which was to be built at the point where the East Timori Road ran into the Shadow Rift. This project never progressed very far, however, for the carpenters found that anyone who entered the Mists below vanished without a trace. The remains of this staircase, called the Descent, still cling like a vine to the side of the cliff, but the project has long since been abandoned.

The Fracture: The Fracture is a series of natural caverns that run from southwestern Tepest down to the grasslands of the Shadow Rift. Although as of yet undiscovered by the outside world, these

catacombs allow the Arak to explore, and occasionally to raid, the outside world.

Actual Geography

The geography on the floor of this mysterious canyon ranges from hills and light forests to rugged and inhospitable swamps full of dangerous beasts. The Shadow Rift has several major geographic regions, each of which is described in some detail below.

The Rift is divided into two regions, called simply the Northern Rift and the Southern Rift. The former region is not completely unlike that of Ravenloft's other Core domains. The Southern Rift, however, comprises terrain somewhat less familiar to explorers.

The Northern Rift: In general, the Northern Rift includes all of the lands north and west of the Stowndowns.

Plateaus & Terraces—The topography of the Shadow Rift includes a number of terracelike structures that jut out from the cliff faces as well as free-standing plateaus that rise above the surrounding terrain. All told, five of these features are located in the Northern Rift.

Without exception, scrub forests and dense underbrush cover the tops of these stone platforms. The Arak do not often travel to the Plateaus but have explored them enough to have a general idea of what is found there.

The Arak tell stories of mysterious structures and spectral creatures dwelling upon the Plateaus. Whether or not these are true is difficult to say, but nearly all of the shadow elves believe that dark and dangerous things dwell atop these heights.

Even flyers have difficult times ascending these structures, for they are ringed in swirling winds. Flying creatures risk serious injury from the buffeting of these gales. Those who try to scale the sheer cliffs of the plateaus run the risk of being torn loose and falling to their deaths.

The three cities of the Arak (Anvolee, Esmerth, and Beliviue) lie within the bases of these towering structures. While some have suggested tunneling upward, the idea has never been taken seriously by Maeve or Loht.

The Greenlands—Most of the Northern Rift is covered with an expanse of rolling hills. Swaying grasslands and temperate forests cover this area. Here, the Arak have established their cities and built their culture. Little about the Greenlands sets them apart from the lands of Nova Vaasa or Tepest, other than the swirling, dark sky and the uncanny *aliveness* of not only plantlife but normally inanimate objects.

Loch Lenore—Perhaps the most impressive sight in all the Greenlands is that of the Hidden Cascade. This mighty waterfall, which begins its descent above the misty sky of the Shadow Rift (see "Apparent Geography"), crashes into the waters of Loch Lenore. This lake is not very large, but appears to be of tremendous depth. Its churning waters are treacherous to boaters and swimmers, because of both its dangerous currents and deadly predators.

Falling River—The Falling River is a very wide river which flows out of Loch Lenore to meander south and west across the Greenlands. It curls eastward around the Malachite Palace and then heads away with increasing speed. At the cliff's edge, which marks the eastern end of the Northern Rift, it plunges five hundred feet onto the Stowndowns, where it gives birth to the Biting Tarn (see "The Southern Rift").

The Southern Rift: This region of the Shadow Rift is far less pleasant and hospitable than its northern counterpart. It is a place of rocky badlands, acrid swamps, and dangerous beasts. The Obsidian Gate, which links the Shadow Rift with the Demiplane of Shadow, stands in the Southern Rift near the border of Nova Vaasa.

The Stowndowns—This rough and rugged land consists of broken stone flats, dangerous chasms, and otherwise inimical environs. The Stowndowns are shunned by most of the Arak, although some races of outcast shadow elves and other fey creatures still dwell there.

The Biting Tarn—When the Falling River rolls out of the Northern Rift, it promptly plunges five hundred feet over the cliff that divides the Greenlands from the Stowndowns. Where that waterfall impacts the broken and barren lands of the Southern Rift, it fans out to form a small lake known as the Biting Tarn.

The waters of the Tarn are quite unfit for drinking; the force of the Falling River's arrival churns up many minerals and contaminates the lake, making the water brackish and acrid. As might be imagined, the fish and other aquatic life that live in the tarn are as dangerous and hostile as their environment.

Two rivers roll out of the Tarn, both of which are as unpleasant as their source. One of these, the Grimfey Flow, heads east and then south for a short distance before cascading over the edge of the Stowndowns and into the Black Marsh below. The other, called the Nightrush, barely comes into existence before hurling itself into the oblivion of the Black Marsh to the north.

The Black Marsh—The Black Marsh is a salty,

almost toxic, swamp that spreads out from base of the Stowndowns. Few Arak dare to venture into this bubbling and rancid morass of deadly plants and dangerous animals.

Gossamers, banshees, and the other incorporeal dead of Loht's unholy host haunt these expanses. Here, unhindered by the mire in which they dwell, these creatures drift about in endless agony. Whenever possible, they seek to ease their own suffering by slaughtering those foolish enough to enter this realm.

The Darkenheights—In the easternmost regions of the Southern Rift, roughly halfway between the borders with Nova Vaasa and Barovia, stands a spire of barren stone and wiry scrub known as the Darkenheights. At the very top of this peak, which rises some fifteen hundred feet above the thick waters of the Black Marsh, stands the Obsidian Gate.

The slopes of the Darkenheights are as dangerous as they are dark. It is here that Loht has been assembling his unholy host of zombies, ghouls, and other corporeal undead. Unless directed to do otherwise by Loht, these vile creatures mostly wander about aimlessly. When they come upon the living, either Arak or outlander, they set upon them mercilessly with tooth and claw.

Cities and Structures

The shadow elves and their changelings have built several large cities at the bottom of the Shadow Rift. These strange cities easily rival the glory of any Ravenloft metropolis. This misty chasm also boasts several impressive structures, as deadly as they are awesome.

Anvolee: Anvolee is the northernmost of the three Arak cities and is occupied chiefly by changelings—mortals who have been transformed by the shadow elves and carried away to live with them. Many of the changelings here were great craftsmen in life, and now carry on their trades for their fey masters. Goldsmiths, silversmiths, and blacksmiths create wonders of finely engraved or wrought metalwork. Master carvers working in wood produce elegant furniture and parquetry, priceless chess sets, elaborate doors, and anything else imaginable. Sculptors produce statues and gargoyles of such lifelike realism that some, it is said, have actually animated with personalities of their own. Weavers and websters create tapestries with more-than-mortal skill, honed by decades or centuries of tireless absorption in their several tasks. Others spin the finest of fabrics and create wondrous clothing for every need, from the sturdy kilts of the muryan to glossiest satins and velvets for the sith and the sheerest of silks for the shee.

The weaponsmiths of Anvolee are legendary, gathered by the dancing men from among the most talented of many generations of their fellows, each working ever to surpass his or her last achievement and perfect his or her craft.

In short, within this city of some five thousand changelings can be found practitioners of virtually every craft known to Ravenloft, including some now lost to the outside world. The fey take only those whose dedication to their craft surpasses every earthly tie, and their changelings thereafter gain the benefits of undivided devotion to the task at hand.

In a sense, this town appears the most "normal" of all the Shadow Rift's cities to outsiders. It consists entirely of small cottages, forges, and workshops, in each of which a solitary changeling labors away at his or her tasks. The thatched half-timbered buildings are divided by cobbled streets and many parks filled with flowers (maintained by the patient alvenkin) and the sound of running water. The fountains and artificial streams are the creation of the fir, as is the huge "clocktower" at the end of town, a circular tower reaching from floor to ceiling filled entirely with clockwork of unknown purpose, all lovingly maintained by fir and firkin.

The setting for all this idyllic normality, however, is a huge underground cavern illuminated by an artificial green sun set in the ceiling overhead. It is never dark here, although it is never full light either, and the changelings labor on through the endless verdant day. The doors in the hillside leading to this place are hidden, and can only be found on certain days of the year unless the heroes have an Arak guide.

Esmerth: This city is a place of eerie beauty, located in a series of caverns filled with flowstone, columns, stalactites, and stalagmites. It is difficult for an observer to know where the cave ends and the city begins, with its delicate pinnacles and great hourglass spires. Echo caves and bottomless pools are common, and everywhere there are labyrinthian tunnels and endless winding steps connecting all the chambers of these hollow hills.

Esmerth is primarily a city of the shee, and it is filled with mortal musicians and artists they lured away from the surface world, who can be found here performing lays or finely fingering some intricate piece of music to an intent audience or from one to three shee. This place is a bard's paradise, where he or she may rub shoulders with some of the greatest poets, composers, and performers their world has ever known. Such characters should beware or the enchantment of this place will fall upon them and they will not be able to bring themselves to leave while there is still one lute fingering untried, one poem unread, one song unsung.

Beliviue: If Esmerth is eerie, Beliviue is downright creepy, at least to the eyes of most mortal visitors. The buildings here resemble barrows on the outside and, within, the interior chambers of Neolithic tombs, with trilathon doorways and megalithic walls. Individual standing stones, as well as oblong stone circles and alignments of rows of monoliths are common in this part of the Shadow Rift. It has been said that Beliviue is the home of a thousand solitary souls, and the arrangement of the city bears this out. The sith are a somber folk with little use for ostentation who are said to envy the quiet of the grave. Their private quarters tend to reinforce that impression, being simple in the extreme, even bleak by human standards. Larger, "common" rooms for gatherings of this essentially solitary folk bear names such as the Hall of Silence, the Hall of Memory, and the Hall of Dreams, where individual sith go to meditate, along with their thoughts even in the midst of others of their kind. Few visitors are welcomed here, and those who do come are expected to remain silent—speaking out of turn could bring swift disaster on the unwise trespasser.

The Malachite Palace: Ever since the shadow elves came into Ravenloft, their rulers have lived within the walls of the Malachite Palace. This structure is said to have originally been built beneath the domain of Arak and then mystically relocated here when the Shadow Rift formed. Certainly some who have glimpsed this emerald city from afar have maintained that it faded in and out as if it were not altogether real.

The Malachite Palace is an impressive structure designed to fill the onlooker with awe. It is not a military stronghold and is, as its name indicates, a palace or residence rather than a castle. Fine pinnacles, graceful lines, and spindly towers offer those who see it a sight that will long haunt their dreams thereafter.

Arak's Tomb: No historical or modern figure is more revered by the shadow elves than Arak the Erlking, the warrior who made it possible for them to escape from the Demiplane of Shadow. Because he was disintegrated by Gwydion during the flight of the shadow elves, this tomb serves as a cenotaph or monument and not an actual crypt.

Arak's tomb stands at the center of the shadow elves' realm, atop the sheer cliffs that rise from the shores of the Biting Tarn. Looking out over the Stowndowns to the east and the Greenlands to the west, it marks the border between the Northern Rift and the Southern Rift.

The Tomb is a site of pilgrimage for many shadow elves, who come to remember and pay homage to the fallen leader who sacrificed himself that they might reach this land. For more on Arak's history, see page 125.

The Obsidian Gate: Perched atop the Darkenheights, this gleaming black structure is one of the most ominous and unusual throughout the Land of Mists. Clearly of magical construction, the gate appears to exist in both Ravenloft and the Demiplane of Shadow, fastening the two realms together at this one place.

Complete information on the Obsidian Gate can be found in Appendix Three: Relics and Artifacts.

Climate

The weather in the Shadow Rift is not unlike that found in the lands around it. It has enough rain to support the forests and keep the night-blooming gardens of the Arak flowering. However, winter never comes to this place, so snow and ice are unknown here.

Night and Day

A disturbing aspect of life in the Shadow Rift, at least to those from beyond its borders, is the fact that sunlight never shines upon the domain. The eternal barrier of the Mists hanging above the Shadow Rift chokes out all light from above, making the land of the Arak a place as dark as any moonless night. Considering the fact that sunlight is deadly to the shadow elves, however, this is hardly a disadvantage from their point of view.

Temporal Fugue

Time passes at a different rate within the confines of the Shadow Rift. For every year that a traveler spends among the Arak, only a fortnight (fourteen days) passes in the outside world. Thus, in the eleven years that Loht spent wandering in the world of men looking for the *Sword of Arak*, almost three centuries passed in his homeland.

The reasons for this phenomenon remain unexplained, even to the Arak. Possibly this is an aspect of the Demiplane of Shadow that has spilled over into Ravenloft. It is even more likely that this effect is linked to the Obsidian Gate. Perhaps the fugue would dissipate if the Gate were destroyed, but that unlikely event would probably destroy the Shadow Rift as well, so the theory is theory is unlikely to be tested—at least by the shadow elves.

Cultural Level

Like many of its neighboring lands, the Shadow Rift is a late medieval domain, with some features of Tutor England (architecture, music, language). See Chapter One of *Domains of Dread* for further details about cultural levels.

The Folk

The people of the Shadow Rift are the Arak or "shadow elves." They are not native to the Demiplane of Dread, nor to the Demiplane of Shadow, where they dwelt before coming into the Land of Mists. Formerly known as the ellefolk, these elf-like beings were snatched from their homes on an unknown world (presumed to be somewhere on the Prime Material Plane) and imprisoned on the Demiplane of Shadow by the sorcerer-fiend, Gwydion. As a reward for centuries, then millennia, of faithful servitude, Gwydion eventually infused these elves with the essence of shadows, transforming them into a race of creatures unlike any other. While often referred to as "elves," this is actually a misnomer. They are not related to the elves known on other worlds. Throughout this product they are referred to interchangeably as shadow elves, Arak, and fey, but the reader should not confuse them with the elves or Toril, Oerth, or other more familiar realms; they are a race apart, as far above the elves as the elves are above ordinary humans.

The Arak are something of an aberration in the Demiplane of Dread. Like the mysterious Vistani, they made their own way into the Land of the Mists. While they do have a darklord, Gwydion has remained trapped within the Obsidian Gate for the entire time they have been in Ravenloft and thus has little direct effect on their day-to-day lives. Effectively trapped in their realm by their allergy to sunlight, they can venture out into the surrounding lands under cover of nightfall if they are careful.

The Law of Arak

Prior to their exodus to the Demiplane of Dread, the shadow elves were ruled by Arak the Erlking, seneschal of Gwydion the sorcerer-fiend. It was Arak who, in response to Gwydion's tormenting of the fey and setting them against one another for his sport, laid down the law that now bears his name: that no shadow elf shall kill another. This law they keep even to this day. Thus, while changelings may war to settle Arak disputes, no Arak will deliberately murder another. The penalty for such is shunning: No other fey will ever again speak to, touch, or interact in any way with one who has broken Arak's law. Such offenders tend to sequester themselves in the wilds of the Shadow Rift or exile themselves in the surrounding domains. Cut off from all normal interaction with their own kind, these solitaires are usually driven mad by an eternity alone with their own thoughts and are, as a rule, very, *very* dangerous.

The Two Courts

After the Erlking's death in the passage through the Obsidian Gate, the shadow elves split into two factions, each ruled by one of his children. His daughter, Maeve, became the Faerie Queen, ruler of the Seelie Court—the shee, portune, fir, and alven. His son, Loht, refused to take the title "king" out of respect for his father, and hence became the Prince of Shadows, sovereign of the Unseelie Court—the sith, muryan, powrie, and teg. Each "court" is merely a loose grouping of fey, indicating where that breed's allegiances lie. Maeve and Loht jointly rule the Arak from the Malachite Palace, each passing judgment over his or her respective subjects and jointly deciding issues of import to all the Arak.

While the Unseelie Court is definitely evil, so far as their attitudes go toward others not of their kind, the Seelie court is not necessarily "good"—rather, it is essentially neutral so far as humankind and the other non-Arak races of the World Above are concerned. There are some good Arak—the rare portune, the elusive shy fir, the frivolous and flighty alven—but primarily the sensuous, amoral shee determine the Seelie Court's outlook. Similarly, the sinister but elegant sith dominant the Unseelie Court, although here the battle-loving muryan, murderous powrie, and feral teg have been stirred by Loht's quiet fanaticism and are now working together far more closely than has ever been the case in the past. Not since the Erlking's days have any of the shadow-elf breeds been so united by a single will and purpose.

The wholly practical brag, for their part, truly belong neither to the one court or the other. Devoting all their attention to their endless tasks of shaping stone in such a way that it will forever withstand the ravages of time, they build for both Seelie and Unseelie fey with equal willingness, asking only some interesting task to challenge their architectural and engineering masterskills.

Encounters

The Shadow Rift is a realm of strange magic and fantastic creatures. Unlike the rest of Ravenloft, it is an area steeped in magical spells and powers. This wealth of magic is reflected in the nature inhabitants of the region as well as in the structure of the Shadow Rift itself.

Because the Shadow Rift is a land of perpetual twilight, all of the creatures who dwell there can be considered nocturnal. This applies even to those creatures who are not normally denizens of the night. As the Shadow Rift has no daylight, only those who have been able to adapt themselves to the darkness can survive there.

Arak

The Shadow Rift is home to hundreds of races of fey-folk in addition to the "Nine Breeds" described in Appendix Four of this book. A few of these creatures are good, many more are evil, and the rest are neutral. By and large, the more sinister fey have aligned themselves with the Unseelie Court, while the less malign are aligned with maeve's Seelie Court. It is best to keep in mind that, under the rule of Loht, the evil Arak have prospered and the Unseelie Court may currently be said to dominate the land. Thus, more of these creatures will be encountered wandering around the domain than any other. Use **Table 18** when determining the alignment of any Arak randomly encountered:

Table 18:
Arak Encounters

Roll 1d100	Good/Evil
01–50	Evil
51–85	Neutral
86–00	Good

When creating new races of fey-folk for these encounters, draw freely on such folklore beings as brownies, dryads, leprechauns, nymphs, mermaids, goblins, pixies, korreds, etc. Be sure to give these familiar creatures some twist to make them seem strange and uncanny. Even the most benign fey should seem odd and eerie, while the most evil among them should be horrific in unexpected, startling ways (a gentle giant, cannibalistic dryad, and friendly, long-armed arboreal goblins would be only three examples out of many). Remember to give these creatures new names and alter their descriptions to help them match the Arak presented in Appendix Four.

Animals and Plants

The environment of the Shadow Rift makes it a haven for nocturnal creatures such as bats, wolves, and owls. As a rule, almost any such creature from a temperate environment can be found within this domain.

The same diversity is true of plants. A wide variety of night-blooming flowers and plants are found beneath the dark skies of the Shadow Rift. Curiously, however, a number of plants that would normally die without sunlight also thrive here. The woods and forests of the Shadow Rift are especially thick with dangerous, carnivorous, and intelligent plants. Far more forms of plantlife than will be known to even the most well-traveled druid can be found here as well, with familiar and unknown side by side. Many plants here differ subtly from their mundane analogues in ways that evade the casual observer but are unsettling to the sharper-eyed visitor. Do all you can when describing landscapes and foliage to make them feel that they're "not in Kansas anymore." Do not overdo the bizarre until they become jaded, but use strange touches to keep them from ever feeling quite at home—chestnuts that fall from the tree and then roll away on their own, underbrush that pulls back to let characters by, fallen leaves that fly back and attach themselves to the tree again—all these can convey the desired sense of eeriness.

Monsters

Most of the monsters that one is likely to encounter in the Shadow Rift are drawn from the darkest corners of the universe. Things like shadows, shadow mastiffs, shadow-fiends, gloomwings, and other natives of the Demiplane of Shadow are common enough in the Shadow Rift. It is unknown whether these creatures followed the Arak into Ravenloft through the Obsidian Gate or the Mists brought them in as a gift of sorts.

Creatures of darkness who are native to other planes have also made their way into the Shadow Rift: will-o'-wisps, shadow cloakers, bastelli, and other such beasts are often encountered in the wilds of the Shadow Rift, along with shadowy versions of more normal animals (shadow deer, shadow wolves, shadow birds, etc.). Other monsters with special ties to the sylvan folk are also found in this domain. Examples of these creatures include the hell hounds raised by the muryan, the nightmares upon which many evil Arak ride, the black unicorns which haunt the north rift's deeper forests, and cath-shee (or faerie cats) who seem to show up wherever any sylvan race is encountered in large numbers.

Closing the Borders

The borders of the Shadow Rift are always closed, a reflection of Gwydion's imprisonment. Neither Loht nor Maeve is unable to open them or affect them in any way. However, as they are not aware that other rulers have the ability to do this, it is not something that ever preys upon their minds.

While the borders of the Shadow Rift are closed, the Mists themselves close the place off from the outside world. This barrier appears to seal off only the top of Rift, but it also exists within the stone walls that surround it, permeating the very rock like petroleum in oil-rich shale.

Those who attempt to pass through this vaporous barrier (usually by climbing into or out of the Shadow Rift) find that it gradually causes them

to fade away. For every ten feet of travel, the character becomes ten percent transparent and unsolid. Thus, someone who ventures sixty feet into the Mists is sixty percent nonexistent. A character who reaches the one hundred foot mark simply ceases to exist. Where he or she goes and what becomes of these bold trespassers is impossible to guess, but it is known that those who vanish in this way cannot be recovered with any known magic, not even a *wish* spell.

Other than the Obsidian Gate, only one way into or out of the Shadow Rift currently exists. In a region of Tepest known as the Wytchwood lies a mysterious cavern known as the Fracture. Those who travel into this underground passage find that it opens (eventually) into the Shadow Rift far below. Such transit is neither easy nor safe, however, for while the natives of Tepest may not know of the Fracture, the Arak do, and they have taken steps to keep intruders out of their realm.

In truth, the borders of the Shadow Rift are tied to the Obsidian Gate. As long as that magical portal is sealed, the Mists will divide the Shadow Rift from the rest of the Core. In the event that the gate should be destroyed, the Mists would dissipate, and the Shadow Rift would be exposed for all to see. However, this event would be extremely detrimental for the shadow elves, since sunlight is deadly to all breeds of Arak.

The History

The passage of time in the Demiplane of Shadow and within the confines of the Shadow Rift is not consistent with that in the rest of the Demiplane of Dread. Only the fact that the Arak seem to be essentially immortal (that is, they do not age or die of natural causes) allows them to interact with the rest of the population of Ravenloft at all.

With that in mind, the times mentioned in this history are presented from the perspective of the Arak. Any actual dates that are given, however, derive from the Barovian calendar, which serves as the standard in Ravenloft.

Abduction

The tale of the Shadow Rift and its people begins in a region of absolute darkness that scholars call the Demiplane of Shadow. Like Ravenloft and all the other known demiplanes, this pocket universe hangs suspended in the mystical vapors of the Ethereal Plane.

At the heart of this dark realm lived a malevolent creature of great evil and powerful magic named Gwydion. In an effort to promote his evil ways, this sorcerer-fiend (as he came to be called) sought out a race of beings to claim for his own. Casting his net into the seas of the multiverse, he drew in the ellefolk, an elf-like race from an ancient world unknown to men or dwarves.

Taking delight in their artistry and cleverness, Gwydion decided that these folk would make admirable servants. In this way, the ill-fated ellefolk were forced to dwell on the Demiplane of Shadow.

Transformation

Gwydion ruled over his elves for countless centuries. In a twisted way, the malevolent being even felt an affection for the beings he had enslaved, proud of having gained such peerless servants. Under his ever watchful eye, they lived and died, toiled and slept, suffered and wept—all for the greater glory of a creature dark and evil beyond their understanding.

Because of his growing affinity for the elven race who served him, Gwydion cast a powerful spell to infuse them all with the essence of shadows, thus turning them into the *fey*. In the mind of the sinister sorcerer-fiend, this action should have made his slaves eternally thankful to him. The fey, however, did not appreciate his terrible gift. Still, these newly created "shadow elves" could do little about the wrong that Gwydion had inflicted upon them. They still lacked the knowledge and the power to oppose their evil master.

On the day that this terrible transformation occurred, a pair of twins were born to a future hero named Arak and his bride Finngalla. Christened Maeve and Loht, these two babies were the first true shadow elves.

The Obsidian Gate

For uncounted years, the shadow elves toiled endlessly to further the power and plans of Gwydion. Throughout that time, however, they hungered to regain their freedom and leave behind this realm of endless night.

In time, their chance came. Gwydion grew bored with his own realm and sought to conquer new lands. He directed his seneschal, Arak the Erlking, to begin construction of magnificent portal known as the Obsidian Gate. Centuries in the making, this portal would enable the shadow-fiend to spread his darkness to a new world, subjugating new populations to his might.

But unknown to Gwydion, Arak plotted against him, and keyed the device so that the gate would shut down once the Erlking's sword or crown passed through the far end. Secretly he spread word that the time for flight was at hand, but told his full plan to none but his children, Maeve and Loht.

Thus when the great day came, Gwydion watched with pride as Arak mustered the invasion force before the great gate. Only gradually did it dawn upon him that the vast host passing into the portal was too great for any invading army. Piercing the complex illusions woven by the shadow-elves' master wizards, he perceived with dismay that not only elite soldiers but the entire people, great and small, were pouring through at a swift rate, seemingly moving at five times normal speed (this *accelerated haste* being another magical effect devised to expedite their escape). He rushed to stop them, plunging into the gate at the heels of the final fey to dart across the border, only to be confronted by Arak himself.

There, while his people fled behind him down the long transdimensional tunnel, the Erlking did battle with his people's greatest enemy. The skills honed by decades of practice that the shadow-fiend had thought were to be used in the planned invasion were now put to work holding back the great sorcerer-fiend, deflecting his attacks, blocking his passage. Ever the rebellious seneschal retreated, driven back by Gwydion's overwhelming might, yet still he fought on, saved from instant annihilation by the spells worked into his regalia.

Far ahead, Loht and Maeve led the exodus until at length they reached the far end and emerged into the demiplane of Ravenloft—a domain of dread to most others, but a near-paradise to them compared to the world they had just fled from. While they guarded the gate, one to either side, more and more of their people poured through, until only Arak himself remained in the dimensional tunnel, still locked in mortal combat with the sorcerer-fiend.

Somehow, Arak managed to drive Gwydion back enough to give himself the opportunity to run for the gate. However, as soon as the Erlking reached the edge of the portal, Gwydion lashed out with a bolt of magical energy, vaporizing the shadow elf instantly. Dumbfounded, Loht could do nothing but stand there frozen, watching as the sorceror-fiend quickly rushed toward them. Only Maeve had enough composure to reach through and grasp the regalia, pulling it into Ravenloft and closing the gate. In memory of their lost leader, the shadow elves took a new name: the Arak.

An Unexplored Land

On the other side of the gate, the shadow elves found themselves in a land unlike any they had ever known. The year was 575 (Barovian time), and they had come into the Demiplane of Dread. The Arak have thus been in Ravenloft for one hundred and seventy-six years. Because of the temporal fugue that surrounds the Obsidian Gate, however, over fifty-two centuries have passed by their reckoning.

Quickly learning that the sunlight of the surface world was fatal to them, over the course of the following decades the Arak built for themselves an underground kingdom. Here, beneath the tortured land, they carved out a realm not unlike that they had known long ago, before their sojourn on the Demiplane of Shadow. But this realm, which they named *Arak* after their lost leader, was theirs to rule as they saw fit, with no tyrannical fiend commanding their every action.

Although they had little to do with the inhabitants of the Demiplane of Dread, occasional encounters occurred, and stories of these strange folk spread throughout the lands. In some stories the Arak were kind, in others they were evil, but always they were mysterious and fantastic. Some spoke distrustingly of a beautiful queen, perilously fair, with skin pale as snow, while others whispered of a dark prince who tamed the very shadows to act as his spies and bring him news of the lands above.

Religious Fervor

Soon the rumor spread that the unseen elves who lurked in subterranean darkness were none other then the drow. While untrue, this belief was probably reinforced by the arrival in Arak, not long after its founding, of three fugitive drow who had been drawn into Ravenloft and, hearing of a "drow" realm, had

made their way to it. These exotic elves were made welcome by Loht and joined his Unseelie Court, soon rising to positions of power. Their leader, an outcast priestess of Lolth, introduced the worship of that spider-goddess. Although the original drow soon perished at each other's hands in a complicated series of assassinations, the new faith spread rapidly among the more depraved of the fey, who treated it as an amusing decadence. Alarmed by their disregard of the Law of Arak, and distrusting their growing power, Loht took steps to suppress the new religion. A bitter power struggle ensued between the Prince of Shadows and Tristessa, the shadow-elf who was now high priestess of the cult, from which Loht emerged triumphant in 588.

Ultimately, Loht broke the law of Arak and staked Tristessa and her baby to the outer slopes of Mt. Lament, where they were killed by the sun's rays. Tristessa's evil had grown so great that upon her agonizing death, she was "awarded" rulership of her own domain. She now rules Keening, where she haunts its lands as a banshee, cursed to forever search for her lost child.

A Darklord in the Shadows

Unknown to all, this reclusive domain did have its darklord—Gwydion the shadow-fiend, who had remained trapped within the Obsidian Gate, unable to do more than cast a pall over the realm outside. For millennia he has strove to find a way to escape this prison, but the Erlking wrought too wisely. Only if the gate is opened from without can the sorcerer-fiend emerge and directly affect the world beyond.

Then, when the Grand Conjunction shattered the fabric of Ravenloft, the shadow sorcerer saw his chance. When the tumultuous events surrounding the Grand Conjunction were over, the domain of Arak had seemingly disappeared.

But this was only the first part of Gwydion's plan. Exerting himself to the utmost, he began to send dark dreams to the Shadow Prince. Appearing as Loht's father, Gwydion gradually convinced him that Arak was alive and trapped within the Obsidian Gate, having ultimately triumphed through sheer indomitable will and driven the shadow-fiend back to the Demiplane of Shadow. Now Arak wished to rejoin his people. But all must be kept secret until the great day when, having reassembled all the *Regalia of Arak*, Loht could reopen the gate and let his father through.

The Wanderer

Filled with a new sense of purpose, and urged on by the voices in his head, Loht set about his mission at once. While Maeve dallied with her changelings, he patiently gathered together the scattered regalia. Only two eluded him: the crown Maeve always wore and the *Sword of Arak*, his own heirloom, which had vanished from his side at the time of the Grand Conjunction. Leaving the Shadow Rift, Loht roamed far and wide through the lands of the Core, ever seeking the sword.

Eventually the Prince of Shadows discovered that the sword had fallen into the hands of Tristessa, the darklord of Keening—and his own former subject! Realizing it would take some powerful inducement before she would treat with him, he developed a plan to recover the crown from the banshee by returning to her the one thing she most desired: her missing baby. The final stages of Loht's quest to recover this magical relic are presented in the RAVENLOFT adventure *Servants of Darkness*.

The Present

It took Loht almost eleven years (as measured by the people of Ravenloft) to recover the *Sword of Arak* and make his way into the dark depths of the Shadow Rift. Assuming that some three months have passed in the Core domains since Loht returned to the Shadow Rift (depending on the individual campaign), this means that about six and a half years have passed for the Arak. During that time, Loht has forged ahead with his plan, which is now nearing fruition. The Unseelie Court, re-energized by his charismatic fervor, is in ascendance, with sith, teg, and powrie openly raiding into surrounding domains. It is important to note, however, that Loht's followers do not know their lord's secret agenda.

Prompted by his inner voices, Loht intends to open the Obsidian Gate and allow "Arak" to enter the Shadow Rift. He believes that the Erlking will then reunite all the fey and usher in a new Golden Age, with Loht as his trusted seneschal. Gwydion, of course, has other plans.

The shadow-fiend intends first to destroy this useful tool the moment his task is completed, lest he turn upon the darklord as his father did so many long years ago. Next he will resubjugate the shadow elves—a task he looks forward to with relish. The changelings and any mortals that fall into his power he will slay in order to swell the ranks of his saugh.

Once these pleasant tasks have been completed, and his wayward servants duly punished, he will begin to send spies, assassins, and kidnappers out into the surrounding lands and begin plotting the destruction or conquest of the rest of the demiplane—one domain at a time. Probably an impossible task, but Gwydion is patient as only an evil immortal can be, and is quite willing to wait another five thousand years if that is what it takes to slake his desire for domination.

Good and evil lie close together.
—Sir John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton
letter to Mandell Creighton
April 5, 1887

Appendix Two
Who's Doomed

Loht, Prince of Shadows

Lord of the Unseelie Court
Arak (Sith), Lawful Evil

Armor Class	0 (–2)*	Str	17
Movement	15	Dex	19 (20)*
Level/Hit Dice	11	Con	17*
Hit Points	45	Int	18
THAC0	9	Wis	14
No. of Attacks	4	Cha	21
Damage/Attack	1d8+5/1d8+5 (*Sword of Arak* plus Strength bonus)		
Special Attacks	Spells (4/4/4/3/3), fear aura, gaze		
Special Defenses	Parry, +3 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to steel weapons or fire- and heat-based attacks.		
Magic Resistance	45%		

*These parenthetical numbers reflect the bonuses bestowed by the *Regalia of Arak*.

Loht is a sith, the tallest of the Arak races. As such, he stands fully six feet in height, although his slender build makes him weigh far less than one might expect. His face is gaunt and angular, a fact accented by his long, tapering ears. Loht's long silver hair flows down to the small of his back.

Like most sith, Loht favors dark colors and fashionable styles. His usual garb is a slender embroidered tunic, tied about the waist with a woven silver sash, and a pair of tight black leggings. A silver clasp at his throat secures the long gray cape that trails behind him. The delicate nature of these clothes, especially when worn with his favorite gray tricorn, makes him look quite the dandy—but a deadly and dangerous foe nonetheless.

Like all sith, Loht can take on shadow-form at will, but as the sith-lord he has the added ability that he can assume the form of any creature whose shadow he has ever touched. He can maintain the shadow form indefinitely but can only assume the other forms for up to three hours total per day.

Loht carries only two weapons: the mighty *Sword of Arak* and the *Dagger of Arak*. These artifacts are described fully in Appendix Three: Relics and Artifacts.

Background: Loht and his sister Maeve are twins, the first child born to the hero Arak after the ellefolk were transformed into the shadow elves. Their mother, Finngalla, died an hour later. Their father, Arak the Erlking, taught them much about rulership, for he was both Gwydion's seneschal, enforcing all his master's orders, and the leader who plotted rebellion.

When the time came at last to use the Obsidian Gate, Loht and Maeve led the exodus while their father fought a rearguard action, staving off defeat long enough for his people to escape. Loht has never recovered from the crushing blow of his father's death but joined with Maeve in creating a new home for their people. As the domains of Ravenloft gradually came together to form what is now the Core, Loht's people came to grow at home in this strange new world.

When the Arak entered the Demiplane of Dread, a peculiar temporal fugue manifested itself. Because of this, Loht and Maeve's rule has lasted not for years, decades, or even centuries, but for millennia. While they sat on their thrones, one hundred and sixty-five years passed for the inhabitants of the Core. In the domain of Arak, however, this translated into a reign that lasted for over four thousand years. The time lay heavy on his hands, as it seemed that every sensation had been tried and found wanting, every endeavor attempted and achieved or found impossible, every fey face all too horribly familiar.

Then the visions began. At the time of the Grand Conjunction in 740 (thousands of years after the Arak first came into Ravenloft, by their reckoning), Loht began to hear his father's voice in his dreams, telling him that the Erlking was not truly dead and that he, the Prince of Shadows, was the key to

reuniting him with his people. Filled with new purpose, Loht undertook a great quest to recover the *Sword of Arak*, his father's sword which had been lost in the Grand Conjunction.

For years, the Sith-lord roamed the lands of the Core by night, forced to hide from the deadly light of day like some common vampire, always seeking for news of the sword. During his travels, Loht met up with a mysterious gentleman who revealed many of the secrets of the Demiplane. Even more important, this stranger told Loht that the sword had fallen into the hands of Tristessa, the banshee lord of Keening and Loht's old enemy. Knowing that Tristessa blamed him for her death, Loht cast about for some way to trick her out of the artifact that rightfully belonged to him. As was related in the adventure *Servants of Darkness*, through deception and treachery, Loht managed to acquire the relic.

Making his way back to the Shadow Rift, Loht resumed his throne as ruler of the Unseelie Court and quickly energized the sith, teg, muryan, and powrie. He soon regained all the rest of the items of the regalia except one: the *Crown of Arak*, which was held by Maeve herself. Then Maeve disappeared on a journey of her own, stalling Loht's grand design just as it was nearing completion.

Current Sketch: Loht is a tyrant but not a monster. He is intelligent, witty, capable, experienced, and very deadly. His morbid fascination with death and recently hard-won knowledge of the outside world has convinced him that the harvesting of changelings and saugh should be greatly stepped up, making him a threat to more than just his own subjects.

Loht is the complete master of the Unseelie Court: the sith, the muryan, the powrie, and the teg, plus all the changelings who owe allegiance to them. In addition, he commands the saugh, an army of the undead created from human corpses brought into the Shadow Rift from neighboring domains, and then animated.

At the start of this adventure, it has been roughly three months (depending on the individual campaign) since the events in *Servants of Darkness*. However, due to the temporal fugue, six and a half years have passed in the Shadow Rift. During the interval, Loht has gathered all but one of the items he needs to open the gate: Maeve's crown. While he waits for his spies to bring him word of Maeve's hiding place, he has been building up the saugh, making raids into human villages for fresh changelings, and preparing to open the Obsidian Gate.

Closing the Borders: Neither Loht nor Maeve is this domain's darklord; thus neither has the power to close the borders of the Shadow Rift. Gwydion is the true darklord, but so long as he remains trapped within the Obsidian Gate there is little he can do to darken the lives of his escaped subjects. Loht does send regular muryan patrols to guard the Fracture and make sure those mad Inquisitors in Tepest keep their distance—not that he fears them, but they could be a nuisance. And, of course, he wants to know the minute Maeve returns or send agents into the rift.

Combat: Loht is a dangerous enemy, especially when he holds the potent *Sword of Arak*. Like all sith, he is loathe to actually enter into combat himself. (That is what saugh, muryan, and powrie are for, in his opinion—besides, the Dancing Men actually *like* the stuff.) When forced into combat he is a terrifying foe, dispatching his enemies with efficient, lethal strokes. He fights two-handed, with the *Sword of Arak* in his left hand and the *Dagger of Arak* in his right (for a total of four attacks per round). He can choose to devote any one of his attacks to parrying an opponent's blow, with a successful hit on his part harmlessly deflecting the weapon, whether it was a melee or a missile attack. Heroes who fought him in the adventure *Servants of Darkness* will probably be greatly disconcerted to find that the Prince of Shadows is a far deadlier foe when fought on his own ground.

In addition to his stabbing and slashing attacks, at will Loht can radiate a magical aura that imposes images of death and the grave on the minds of his enemies. This affects every living creature within thirty feet, causing them to make immediate fear checks. In addition, his piercing gaze can break the nerve of anyone who meets his gaze; such folk must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fumble* spell.

Loht is also an accomplished wizard, able to cast spells of the school of necromancy as if he were an 11th-level mage (4/4/4/3/3). Thus, he can choose from the following spells: 1st—*cantrip, chill touch, detect undead;* 2nd—*spectral hand;* 3rd—*feign death, hold undead, vampiric touch;* 4th—*contagion, enervation;* 5th—*animate dead, magic jar, summon shadow.*

Only silver weapons or those of +3 or greater enchantment can harm Loht. He is immune to steel weapons (which includes most normal weapons), even if magical, and to heat or fire-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is very dangerous to Loht, as for all shadow elves. Each round that he is exposed to direct sunlight, Loht suffers three points of damage as his skin literally boils off the bones. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to three points per turn.

Coming from naturally reserved and quiet race, the sith-lord has a 75% chance to move silently, per the thief ability. Combined with his ability to take on shadow form, he can pass by most groups of heroes if he wishes without their ever even suspecting that he was there.

Maeve, The Faerie Queen

Lord of the Seelie Court
Arak (Shee), Neutral

Armor Class	3	Str	9
Movement	15	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	11	Con	9
Hit Points	45	Int	19
THAC0	9	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	22
Damage/Attack	1d8+2 (*Arak rapier +2*) or 1d6+2 (*arrows of keening*)		
Special Attacks	Spells (4/4/4/3/3), charm kiss, fumble aura		
Special Defenses	+3 or better magical weapon needed to hit, immune to stone weapons and fire- and heat-based attacks		
Magic Resistance	45%		

Maeve stands a graceful six feet in height and has long, pale hair that hangs fully to her knees. Her skin is exceedingly fair, almost to the point of being snow-white, and her amber eyes are large and alluring. Her lips and nose are slender, her eyebrows arched, and her whole her face astonishingly angular. Nonetheless, she is stunningly beautiful.

Maeve normally wears flowing gowns of medieval design, with a low-waisted belt. Her chief ornaments are a silver torque set with a radiant sapphire and a sash of shimmering blue satin. Although not a violent woman by any means, Maeve never goes about unarmed but carries an ornate black *rapier +2* that seems oddly out of keeping with her sensuous clothing and frame.

In comparison to the evil-aligned Arak (especially Loht), Maeve may seem benevolent and wholesome, but such is not the case. Her beauty is perilous in that mortals may look upon the Faerie Queen, believe her to be as sweet in nature as in countenance, and love or serve her as they would a virtuous maiden or beloved lady. In fact, her heart is cold, even if it is not evil. She will not deliberately use her feminine charms to beguile mortals and make them do her bidding, but she will accept their service and never return their affections or reward their deeds with any devotion. In fact, Maeve discounts mortal emotions as fleeting, fickle, and fictitious, so she ignores them completely and never so much as considers the amorous motivation behind a mortal's pledge to serve her. If mortals proclaim love for her and she finds them attractive, she may entertain their passions briefly (a century at most), then abandon them as blithely as she might leave the table when dinner is finished. Dungeon Masters should roleplay Maeve as aloof without being snobbish, physically accessible while emotionally unattainable, and overwhelmingly beautiful without the least recognition or appreciation of the fact.

Background: Maeve is the only daughter of Arak the Erlking, the heroic warrior who led the shadow elves out of the Demiplane of Shadow and into Ravenloft. She and her twin brother Loht were the first shadow-elves born after the ellefolk race was infused with shadows by the sorcerer-fiend Gwydion. Their mother Finngalla died less than an hour later, leaving Arak to raise them alone.

Maeve's youth was spent on the Demiplane of Shadow, where she and the other shadow elves lived under the tyranny of the shadow-fiend Gwydion. She was still a child, barely fifty years old, when her father began to oversee construction of the Obsidian Gate. When, at last it was completed and the shadow elves escaped from their sinister ruler through that magical portal, Maeve led the exodus side-by-side with Loht while their father used the *Sword of Arak* to hold Gwydion at bay.

Her father's death was heart-breaking for young Maeve, but it also transformed her from a carefree adolescent into a determined adult. Together with Loht, she ruled the shadow elves for many

centuries as they carved out a new home for themselves beneath the surface of Ravenloft. Maeve's followers came to be called the Seelie Court and Loht's the Unseelie Court, but both remained co-rulers of the entire realm, even when it shifted from beneath Arak into the Shadow Rift.

Under their leadership, the Arak (as the shadow elves now called themselves) prospered. The evil pervasive in the Demiplane of Dread, and Gwydion's unknown influence, meant that the power of the Unseelie Court ever grew and that of her followers ever faded, but the crisis did not come until the Grand Conjunction shook all the land. Loht departed on a secret quest, returning a century later with the long-lost *Sword of Arak* just as he had vowed. Maeve knows that her brother has gathered together all the *Regalia of Arak* save only for her crown but does not know what he intends; she fears that he has gone mad but does not understand the method behind his madness.

Current Sketch: In order to avoid a direct confrontation with the Shadow-Prince, Maeve hid the *Crown of Arak* in the pillar of fire within the Malachite Palace and withdrew to a secret lair in the land of Tepest to meditate over her next move. She knows about the fate of Tristessa (the banshee lord of Keening), although she does not suspect that Loht broke the Law of Arak, so she takes great care to avoid the sun. She has also warded her cottage to keep out Loht's spies and any dangers this mortal world might pose.

As a shee and a ruler of the shadow-elves, Maeve has had much more contact with humans than most of her people, and she finds them endlessly fascinating, an excellent hobby to take the edge off the boredom immortality can offer. Having decided that it would be politic to use outsiders to retrieve the crown and interfere with Loht's grand plan, she keeps an eye out for a group of stout souls and brave mortals suitable for the job. Thus enter the player characters. . . .

Combat: Like all shee, Maeve is reluctant to engage in combat. This is especially true outside of the Shadow Rift, where she does not know the nature of her enemies very well. When forced to defend herself, Maeve uses her Arak *rapier +2* with a blade of blackened silver and an ornate Arak bow. Her bow fires *arrows of keening* which are ivory-tipped and unlike any other that most adventurers have seen. If appraised, they have a material value of five gold pieces each, although they are magical and worth far more than that if their powers are known. When an *arrow of keening* is fired, it begins to wail like a banshee, causing all creatures within twenty-five feet of the flight path of the missile to make a morale check. *Arrows of keening* are +2 weapons that inflict a base of 1d6 points of damage.

Maeve is a master enchantress, able to cast spells from the enchantment/charm school as if she were an 11th-level mage. She can choose from the following spells: 1st—*cantrip, charm person, friends, hypnotism, sleep, taunt;* 2nd—*bind, deeppockets, forget, ray of enfeeblement, scare, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter;* 3rd—*hold person, suggestion;* 4th—*charm monster, confusion, emotion, enchanted weapon, fire charm, fumble, Leomund's secure shelter, magic mirror;* 5th—*chaos, domination, fabricate, feeblemind, hold monster, Leomund's lamentable belaborment.* Targets suffer a –4 penalty to their saving throws against her charms.

Like all shee, Maeve has the power to entrance mortals with her kiss, which acts as a *charm person* spell (again, with a –4 penalty to the saving throw). The duration of this effect is permanent until and unless Maeve decides to release him or her.

Anyone who targets a melee or missile attack at Maeve is automatically subject to the effects of a *fumble* spell (no saving throw) unless he or she can overcome her magic resistance (45%). Only lead weapons or those of +3 or greater enchantment can harm Maeve. Also, she is immune to stone weapons, even if magical, and to lightning or electricity-based attacks.

Maeve has the ability to change herself into a bird (typically a nightingale) for up to eight hours a day, changing back and forth as it suits her.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to all shee, whatever their form, and Maeve is no exception. Each round that Maeve is exposed to direct sunlight, she suffers three points of damage as her skin smokes and burns as if splashed with acid. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to three points per turn.

Maeve has a vast store of knowledge to draw on from her five thousand years of experience with both Arak and mortals, giving her a 75% chance to know something about any given person, place, or object found in the Shadow Rift or its neighboring domains. Her knowledge of the outside world is more uncertain and less current, and she has only a 10% chance relating to such matters.

We are the slaves of objects around us, and appear little or important according as these contract or give us room to expand.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Conversations with Goethe
Sept. 11, 1828

Appendix Three
Relics and Artifacts

The Sword of Arak

The *Sword of Arak* is a slender long sword forged long ago on the Demiplane of Shadow by Arak the Erkling. The blade is forty inches long and forged of black mithral, a rare alloy found only on that demiplane. The hilt is cut from ivory and carved in the shape of wailing banshee (said to be the likeness of Arak's mate, Finngalla).

History

The *Sword of Arak* was forged of black mithral by the shadow elf hero whose name it bears. Arak carried the blade with him for centuries until the shadow elves fled from the Demiplane of Shadow. While ostensively he bore it as a sign of office as Gwydion's seneschal, to lead his people in battle at the shadow-fiend's behest, the sword was actually woven about with enchantments that enabled Arak to defy Gwydion when the right time came.

After Maeve pulled the *Regalia of Arak* through the Obsidian Gate, closing off the Shadow Rift from the Demiplane of Shadow and trapping Gwydion inside, the weapon passed to Loht, the Prince of Shadows (just as the crown passed to Maeve). It became the symbol of Loht's lordship over the Unseelie Court, and he often used its power to protect his people and the realm.

But when the Grand Conjunction shattered the Demiplane of Dread, the sword was lost in the chaos that surrounded that event. Convinced by visions he began to have at about this time that his father still lived and that the sword was key to setting him free, Loht set forth on a great quest to recover his lost heirloom.

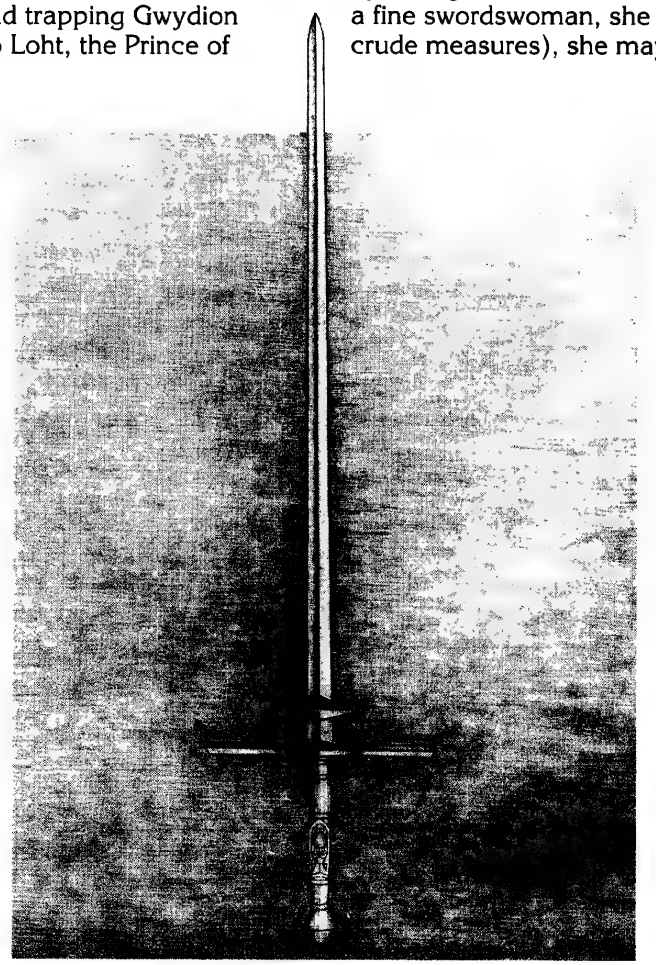
For the next several years, Loht wandered all the lands of the Core, always by night, ever looking for the weapon that the voices inside his head told him would free the Erlking from his agelong imprisonment. When he finally did recover it, as described in the climax of the RAVENLOFT® adventure *Servants of Darkness*, Loht returned at once to the Shadow Rift to set his plan in motion.

As of this writing, the *Sword of Arak* remains the personal weapon of Loht, the Shadow-Prince of the Unseelie Court. He never parts from it and always resorts to it when pressed into combat. All Arak, Seelie and Unseelie alike, revere the Erlking's sword and honor its bearer.

Campaign Use

While it is in the hand of Loht, the *Sword of Arak* will be encountered only by heroes who bravely or foolheartedly challenge the Lord of the Sith. This is how the sword is used in this adventure.

If the heroes manage to claim the sword for their own, they will certainly be loathe to surrender such a potent weapon to Maeve after Loht's defeat. The Faerie Queen will use all her powers of enchantment to convince them not to remove the artifact from the Shadow Rift but to lay it upon Arak's tomb. While it is unlikely that they will end up facing the Princess of the Shee in combat (while a fine swordswoman, she is far too subtle for such crude measures), she may offer to make the bearer her consort for a time, thus guaranteeing that the weapon remains in her land. For his part, Loht will send for them and offer them a deal: their return of his sword in exchange for not being hounded by all his minions to the end of their days and beyond. (This amnesty is not a bad deal, considering the deadliness of sith, teg, and powrie assassins.) Should they try to take the sword out of the Shadow Rift, every fey in the land will work to recover the weapon for their lords (either Maeve or Loht): Shee will attempt to beguile the bearer, sith to silently steal it away, fir to off them something rare and wondrous in exchange, powrie to simply murder them and take it. Deliberately destroying the sword after the



adventure has ended (i.e., by any means other than throwing it into the Obsidian Gate) earns the undying enmity of the Arak.

Powers

This magical blade was meant to be wielded only by shadow elves. Thus, it is used by those of other races only at great peril to the wielder. In the grip of an Arak, however, the weapon is far more effective.

Constant: Outside the Shadow Rift, the *Sword of Arak* functions as a *sword of sharpness +2*, although it ranks as a +4 weapon for purposes of determining who or what can be harmed by it. Within the shadow elves' realm, it is a *sword of sharpness +4*. When used in combat, the *Sword of Arak* may sever an extremity as indicated on **Table 19**, below.

Table 19:
***Sword of Arak* Exceptional Hits**

Opponent	Modified Score to Sever[1]
Normal/Armored	19+/17+
Larger Than Man-Sized	20+
Solid Metal or Stone	21+

[1]This takes into consideration only the sword's +2 or +4 bonus

Unlike other *swords of sharpness*, the *Sword of Arak* never sheds light. It does, however, grant its owner infravision (ninety feet) or doubles the range if the owner already has infravision, whichever is greater.

Invoked: Those who know the proper command words (currently Loht and Maeve) can order the sword to employ many unique powers. By speaking the name of the various races that make up the Nine Breeds, a series of special spell-like abilities can be called into effect. **Table 20** indicates the command words and the spells that they trigger.

Table: 20
***Sword of Arak* Command Words**

Command	Result
"Alven"	*Antiplant Shell*
"Shee"	*Domination*
"Fir"	*Demishadow Monsters*
"Portune"	*Cure Critical Wounds*
"Brag"	*Globe of Invulnerability*
"Muryan"	*Otto's Irresistible Dance*
"Teg"	*Animal Summoning III*
"Sith"	*Raise Dead*
"Powrie"	*True Seeing*

Each power can be used once per day and functions as if cast by a 10th-level mage or priest for purposes of duration. If the weapon is being wielded by a non-Arak, every one of these abilities requires a 5% powers check when used, in addition to any chance invoked by the intent behind their usage.

The *Sword of Arak* has two special powers. First, it can be used to operate the Obsidian Gate, which links the Shadow Rift to the Demiplane of Shadow. Second, since it was originally created to battle the sorcerer-fiend, it inflicts triple damage in combat against Gwydion.

Curse: In the hands of a shadow elf, the *Sword of Arak* has no curse. Each day that the sword is in the possession of anyone but a shadow elf, the *Sword of Arak* must taste blood. In other words, it must be used to kill a creature of size "small" or larger. If the sword's thirst is not quenched each day, the owner becomes slightly less tangible. The hero's very reality erodes away at the rate of 1% per day. This loss is permanent, but the decline only takes place on days that the character does not take a life with the weapon. The afflicted owner will gradually become more and more transparent and intangible, eventually fading entirely from existence (when the total reaches 100%). This curse is obviously linked somehow to the power that prevents anyone from piercing the Shadow Rift's misty barrier.

The *Sword of Arak* is a seductive weapon. Anyone who willingly employs the blade in battle will never knowingly let it out of his or her sight thereafter. If the unthinkable happens and the owner is separated from the sword, he or she does whatever it takes to recover the blade. During this time, the character must attempt a Wisdom check each day that passes without the weapon; failure indicates a dangerous, frantic obsession to recover it at all costs. Woe be unto the poor fool who comes between the bereft owner in such a state and the weapon that he or she claims for his or her own. With five successive and successful Wisdom checks while separated from the blade, the weapon's hold upon the owner is broken.

Means of Destruction

The black mithral from which the *Sword of Arak* was forged makes it almost invulnerable to physical harm. There are, however, two ways by which this powerful weapon can be unmade: The *Sword of Arak* is partially composed of shadowstuff. As such, it can be destroyed if exposed to the unfiltered light of the sun for seven consecutive days, for at least ten hours each day. Also, if returned to the Demiplane of Shadow by being cast into the Obsidian Gate, the *Sword of Arak* will begin to break down. It loses one magical ability per round, starting with the invoked powers, and simply evaporates the round after its final "plus" has decayed away.

The Regalia of Arak

The *Regalia of Arak* is a collection of nine items which belonged to the legendary warrior whose name they bear. These nine items are not all of great power individually. Assembled, however, they may be used to do great evil by opening the Obsidian Gate. Another relic, the *Sword of Arak*, is part of the regalia but described separately (see pages 134–135). In the hands of any non-Arak, these items cause the same obsessiveness already described under the *Sword of Arak* entry.

History

The items that were to become the *Regalia of Arak* were created by shadow elf craftsmen prior to their arrival in Ravenloft. When the shadow elves lived a harsh existence on the Demiplane of Shadow, the items belonged to the warrior Arak. When he perished in the battle with the sorcerer-fiend Gwydion, Maeve pulled the items through the gate.

After the shadow elves had reached Ravenloft, Maeve and Loht presented the pieces to the princes and princesses of each of the Nine Breeds as a sign of their office, with Maeve retaining the crown and Loht the sword in token of their own status as Princess of the Shee and Prince of the Sith, respectively. Recently, however, Loht has been gathering the regalia back together again.

Like Maeve, Loht is aware that the united regalia is the key to operate the Obsidian Gate, but she naively does not realize this is actually his plan. Once he has all nine pieces, he plans to open the portal. By the time the heroes enter the Shadow Rift, Loht possesses eight of the nine items he needs; only the *Crown of Arak*, hidden by Maeve somewhere within the Malachite Palace, still eludes him.

Campaign Use

Clearly, the *Regalia of Arak* can be an important force in any RAVENLOFT campaign. If Loht, or some other person, is able to recover these items, terrible things are certain to happen.

In this adventure, it is assumed that the heroes will be unable to recover any of the eight pieces already in the hands of Loht, including the *Sword of Arak*. Thus, the key to triumphing over Loht is in the *Crown of Arak*. If the characters recover that treasure and banish it from Ravenloft by casting it into the Demiplane of Shadow, Loht's plans are foiled. If Loht takes possession of the crown, however, things will go poorly for the heroes, the Arak, and the whole Shadow Rift.

Powers

Each of the components of the regalia has its own abilities. In most cases, these items mimic objects already familiar to AD&D players, although each has variations which make it unique. In addition to their individual powers, together these items also boost the wearer's Charisma to 21 so far as shadow elves are concerned.

Amulet of Arak

The *Amulet of Arak* is a pendant of eight concentric rings suspended on a thin silver chain. The rings alternate between loops of silver and obsidian, making it look something like an ornate bull's eye. Anyone wearing the amulet receives the standard bonuses associated with an *amulet of life protection*. If the owner is slain, however, his or her spirit remains in the amulet until magically extracted or forced out by the arrival of a new spirit.

Boots of Arak

The *Boots of Arak* are normal-looking, knee-high boots sewn from soft brown leather. A trio of rune-scribed gold bands secured the tops of the boots. These boots function as *boots of elvenkind*. In addition, the wearer of these boots can walk across pressure plates, trap doors, and other such objects without setting them off.

Cloak of Arak

The *Cloak of Arak* is a magical, hooded cloak utterly black in color with a silver clasp to secure it around the neck. When worn, it acts as both a *cloak of elvenkind* and a *cloak of displacement*.

Crown of Arak

The *Crown of Arak* is a delicate-looking knotwork of fine silver strands with a large black opal set in the front. When worn, it bestows upon its owner the same abilities as a *ring of human influence*. The powers of this relic affect even normally resistant races such as elves and Arak, both of whom suffer a –2 penalty to their saving throws.

Dagger of Arak

The *Dagger of Arak* is a slender stiletto with a blade of pure silver and a hilt wound tightly with black leather. In combat, it functions as a *dagger +2*. In addition, the magical energy of this weapon is such that it can strike and injure any creature despite the target's special weapon resistances. Thus, it can wound a monster that normally could be hit by only +3, +4, or even +5 or better magical weapons, and

it could harm a creature normally affected only by wooden weapons.

Gloves of Arak

The *Gloves of Arak* are long, tight-fitting gloves sewn from soft black leather. From the wrist to the elbow, delicate silver threads have been sewn into the leather to create ornate knotwork. When worn, these magical gloves give the wearer a bonus of +1 to his or her Dexterity score. No score may be increased higher than 20 by the gloves, however.

Scepter of Arak

The *Scepter of Arak* is a slender baton made of polished obsidian and set with a globe of gleaming silver. A single large opal is set into the top of the silver sphere. This relic has the ability to *cure light wounds* up to ten times per day. The power is triggered by touching to opal to the flesh of a wounded person.

Signet of Arak

The *Signet of Arak* is a broad magical ring fashioned from a single piece of mithral-silver. The glyph of Arak, a character in the language of the ellefolk, marks the front of it. If this ring is worn, the wearer is affected as if carrying a *stone of good luck*. In addition, it improves the character's Armor Class by one point.

Means of Destruction

Although these items are not especially potent as artifacts go, they are every bit as hard to destroy. The only sure ways to be rid of these magical items is either to expose them to direct sunlight for seven consecutive days, for at least ten hours each day, or to return them to the Demiplane of Shadow. Once in the place where they were created, the objects simply fade away over the course of 1d4 rounds.

Further Adventures

The destruction of the regalia can be interwoven into the long-term campaign, either becoming part of another quest or functioning as the main order of business. Shadow elves will pursue such infidels tirelessly, even if they manage to put long distance and multiple domains between themselves and the Shadow Rift. Meanwhile, darklords and wandering villains alike will take a great interest in such valuable items.

Here are some suggestions for quests to destroy the *Regalia of Arak*:

- **Vistani Quest:** If anyone can divine the means by which the regalia can be destroyed, it is the Vistani. Depending upon the tribe the heroes approach, the Vistani may tell them the truth, lie, or try to rob them of the items. (Of course, if the heroes participated in *Servants of Darkness*, they can always go to Rima.) The tarokka can be used extremely effectively in this matter, as the cards themselves can reveal the means of destruction. In addition, the Vistani always require an additional price for their services, which may lead the heroes on yet another quest!
- **Professor Arcanus:** A wandering showman named Professor Arcanus has a collection of oddities both curious and gruesome. The regalia would make a fine addition to his lineup of attractions, and he is not above stealing them if he can. To complicate matters, the professor is a powerful weregorilla! (The professor and his traveling show are featured in *Children of the Night: Werebeasts*, available November 1998.)

The Obsidian Gate

The Obsidian Gate is a fascinating structure built by the shadow elves during their time of captivity in the Demiplane of Shadow. A great stone orb which looks something like a giant crystal ball, it floats above huge, winding staircase in an obsidian structure atop the Darkenheights.

History

The Obsidian Gate was created by Arak and shadow-elf master-craftsmen at the orders of the evil sorcerer-fiend Gwydion, so that the shadow-fiend could use the fey to invade other worlds and increase his dominion. However, Arak and his helpers tricked their master and used the portal to escape from the Dimension of Shadows, closing the gate behind them. The gate is controlled by the nine relics collectively known as the *Regalia of Arak*. After Arak's death, his son and daughter scattered the regalia among their people to make it difficult for anyone to open the gate again.

In recent years, however, Loht has devised a plan to reopen the gate.

Campaign Use

The Obsidian Gate stands at the top of the Darkenheights, a forsaken spire of rock that rises hundreds of feet above the Black Marsh. Normally, a stable portal that could allow egress from the Demiplane of Dread would be of great interest to those trapped in Ravenloft. Unfortunately, Gwydion the shadow-fiend was trapped in the dimensional tunnel when the portal closed ages ago and has waited ever since for someone to reopen it; should anyone oblige, he promptly comes through and slays his deliverer.

In order to operate the Obsidian Gate, a character must bring the entire *Regalia of Arak* within a hundred feet or so of the gate. Normally, assembling this collection of artifacts could well be the source of a whole campaign in itself; however, Loht has already done so and merely waits for the recovery of the final item before putting his plan into effect.

Powers

The Obsidian Gate is an artifact of great power, though it manifests that energy in very few ways.

Constant: The Obsidian Gate radiates a powerful magical aura of shadowstuff that affects anyone within one hundred yards of it. Within the outer border of this spherical aura, no magical spell or other means can create light brighter than that of a candle. Even powerful magical items like a *sunsword* shed only the faintest glow. Further, magical effects associated with such radiances cease to function within the sphere. Thus, the blinding ray of a *gem of brightness* will be no brighter than a candle and have no affect on its target, though its use still expends a charge.

This magical aura also affects creatures with especially keen vision. Powers like infravision fail to operate within this sphere. Magically-based senses like those created by *wizard eye* or a *ring of x-ray vision* are also rendered impotent there. Closer to the gate itself, this aura lessens, leaving the place a shadowy gray.

In addition to this aura, the Obsidian Gate serves as a prison for Gwydion the shadow-fiend, the imprisoned darklord of this domain (no one but Gwydion himself is aware of this). It also has several pervasive powers that believe are manifestations of the land itself: its very presence maintains the Mists that keep sunlight out of the Shadow Rift and also creates the temporal fugue that makes time pass at a different rate within the Arak realm.

Invoked: The Obsidian Gate has but a single invoked power: it functions as a portal between the Demiplanes of Shadow and Dread. The gate can indeed provide an escape from the Land of the Mists. Whether travelers will be happier on the other side of the gate is a matter of some debate, however.

Curse: The Obsidian Gate has no actual curse associated with it. However, opening the gate releases Gwydion, which is punishment enough for anyone so foolish as to mettle with potent artifacts they do not understand.

Means of Destruction

The Obsidian Gate is a massive construct which would be difficult to destroy even if it were not a focus of incredible magical power. No physical or magical attack can damage the relic. Only one way is known to destroy the Obsidian Gate, although it can more easily be permanently disabled: As an object formed of shadows, the Obsidian Gate will melt away if exposed to the blistering rays of the sun. However, the aura of shadows that encompasses it offers complete protection from such exposure. Only twenty-four hours of uninterrupted sunshine can destroy it. The Obsidian Gate can also be disabled by throwing any piece of the *Regalia of Arak* through the portal, causing the gate to close at once. Since returning any part of the regalia from Ravenloft to the Demiplane of Shadows causes that item to be destroyed, and since the gate only opens if all nine items are present, this effectively seals the gate forever.

You shall judge of a man by his foes as well as by his friends.
—Joseph Conrad
Lord Jim

Appendix Four
Monstrous Compendium

Avanc

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Lake Kronov, Tepest
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS::	4
MOVEMENT:	9, swim 12
HIT DICE:	6+3
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 (bite/bite/tail)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3d4/3d4/2d10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Surprise, whirlpool
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Strength, immunity to fire and heat
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (20′ long)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	2,000

The avanc is a huge, six-legged or six-finned crocodilian beast that inhabits Lake Kronov, a lake in Ravenloft's mysterious domain of Tepest. Both ravenous and malicious, this creature is the bane of swimmers and fishermen alike.

From snout to tail, the avanc runs fully twenty feet long. Its dark, mottled green scales enable it to blend into the vegetation of marshy areas and strike its victims without warning. The eyes of the avanc are black and beady—inhuman as those of a viper, yet filled with malign intelligence. Its long lean snout resembles a cayman's. Reliable accounts suggest that it has legs in shallow water and fins in deep water.

The avanc speaks the language of both crocodiles and fish, who generally carry out its orders (although they are not magically compelled to do so). In addition, it speaks the languages of the various Unseelie shadow elves, especially the sith.

Combat: The avanc is a deadly enemy, for it can often strike without warning and catch an opponent completely off guard. When the avanc hears travelers approaching along the shore, it moves to an area of marsh or swamp grass on the side of the lake and waits, perfectly motionless, for its prey to come within striking distance. Even vigilant scouts (that is, those who have specifically stated that they are watching for some type of ambush) have only a 5% chance per experience level of spotting the creature. As soon as someone comes within fifteen feet of the great beast, it surges forward and attacks, imposing a –2 penalty on the surprise roll of its target.

When the avanc strikes, it does so with its powerful jaws and daggerlike teeth, inflicting 3d4 points of damage per bite. In addition, it can lash at another enemy with its muscular tail for another 2d10 points of damage. Fortunately, the avanc cannot employ both its jaw and tail attacks on the same target.

Against targets on the water, the avanc uses slightly different tactics. Swimmers it simply comes up under and seizes, pulling them down to their deaths one by one. For those in small boats, it uses its whirlpool to destroy the boat, then drags its prey down into the dark waters to drown.

In addition to providing it with an excellent Armor Class, the thick scales that cover the avanc make it very resistant to fire- and heat-based attacks. Normal fire used against the creature has no effect at all. Magical fire, like that created by a *fireball* spell, inflicts only half damage to the creature (one-quarter with a successful saving throw).

Once per day, when the avanc is not in combat, it can cause a whirlpool to form in the waters of a lake, pond, or other body of fresh water. The whirlpool is one hundred feet across, and all vessels who enter its swirling grip must make a successful seaworthiness check each round or capsize. It primarily uses this power to force sailors into the water so that it can devour them.

Habitat/Society: The origins of the avanc are lost in the Mists, but it is believed to have once been a man (or at least a humanoid creature) who ran afoul of Loht. In return for its transgression, the poor fellow was polymorphed into the gilled, crocodilelike thing that it is today.

The avanc does not associate with other crocodiles or fish, although it does sometimes encounter them and can converse with them. Similarly, it has never taken a mate and may not even be able to reproduce, at least in its present form.

Ecology: Although the avanc is a ravenous creature that will greedily consume a dozen grown men if given the chance, it can also go for long periods of time without eating. After the beast has eaten its fill (between twelve and fifteen man-sized creatures) it will retreat to the bottom of the lake and sleep for one week per creature consumed. It is the chief predator of Lake Kronov and the subject of many legends among the children and fisher-folk who dwell along its shores.

Arak, General Information

The shadow elves or Arak, also known as the fey, are a race of sylvan creatures who live in the Shadow Rift. The true nature of the Arak has long been a subject of much debate. Although many travelers call these strange beings "drow," a term imported from Toril and Oerth, this is not accurate. The inhabitants of Arak are no kin to the dark elves and in fact are not elves at all but children of the mysterious Demiplane of Shadow. Throughout this product the terms "Arak," "shadow elf," and "fey" are used interchangeably.

The Shadow Rift

The Shadow Rift is a strange and fantastic place that stands like a gaping wound in the center of Ravenloft's Core, a mystery to all outsiders. It acts as a counterpart to the Border Ethereal, which insulates Ravenloft from the Ethereal Plane. The Rift serves as the membrane between the Demiplane of Dread and the Demiplane of Shadow. Thus, while still a part of the Land of Mists, it has much in common with the dark regions of shadow.

Characteristics

The Arak are a diverse people who run the gamut of the ethical spectrum, ranging from good to evil and lawful to chaotic. They are divided into two main power groups, the Seelie Court (primarily neutral) and the Unseelie Court (primarily evil). Most Arak belong to one of the so-called Nine Breeds: alven, brag, fir, muryan, portune, powrie, shee, sith, and teg. While each breed is unique and has its own traditions and beliefs, all Arak have a few common characteristics.

The Law of Arak: All shadow elves honor the great fallen leader whose name they took, Arak the Erlking, making periodic pilgrimages to his tomb. The Law of Arak states that no shadow elf will deliberately kill another; those who break this law are shunned and driven into exile. The fey also honor Arak's children, Loht the Prince of Shadows (ruler of the Unseelie Court) and Maeve the Faerie Queen (ruler of the Seelie Court) and will obey the direct commands of one, even if their allegiance is given to the other. All Arak hate and fear Gwydion, their former master, to such an extent that they find Ravenloft less dreadful than the home they fled to reach here.

Mischief: All Arak have keen senses of humor and are prone to make mischief from time to time. The form this humor takes depends on the personality of the individual, ranging from harmless practical jokes to dangerous and even deadly. The type of Arak involved is also relevant: For example, sith have a morbid sense of humor and portune a very dry wit; shee love to mess with peoples' emotions, while fir have such a strange sense of humor that other fey do not understand it, much less mortals.

Dependence: While the Arak have adapted well to their new home, they remain unaccustomed to the ways of humans. As such, they watch the affairs aboveground with great interest. The long centuries bring with them a sense of unendurable boredom and sameness, which the fey often seek to escape by amusing themselves through interacting with short-lived unpredictable mortals.

In addition to watching men, the shadow elves often raid their homes and villages for supplies, tools, and other things. These raids are seldom violent in nature; they generally involve sneaking into a place and stealing what is needed in the dead of night. Good fey often try to pay for what they have taken, leaving behind a gem or repairing something. Evil Arak, on the other hand, often make mischief to cover their crimes.

Secret Names: All shadow elves have two names, a common one that they use in daily life and a secret one that they use only with their closest friends. Using a shadow elf's secret name when casting a spell on him or her imposes a –2 penalty on the fey's saving throw. Finding out a shadow elf's secret name is a difficult task, one that often requires an adventure in and of itself. Powerful spells, like *wish* and *limited wish* might reveal an Arak's true name, but any such attempt must overcome the creature's natural magic resistance. Naturally, the shadow elf in question will do all it can to prevent knowledge of its true name from spreading.

Changelings: When the Arak come upon mortals who particularly fascinate them, they often take their shadows back into the Shadow Rift and transform them into changelings. Changelings have no desire to leave the realm of shadows and retain little of their self-will, although their ability in the practice of their craft greatly magnifies. In the domains of Tepest and Nova Vaasa, the physical bodies that are left behind are said to have been "elf-shot," which is also used to describe someone prone to daydreaming or inattentiveness.

Shadow elves cannot create a changeling unless the participant gives his or her consent through eating faerie food. It is worth noting that almost all Arak believe they are doing these folk a favor by transforming them and cannot understand why anyone would pass up the chance to leave their dull, brief mortal lives behind to come and live with the shadow elves. They look upon the process as a means of making a master craftsman even more skillful. While this is certainly true, the cost generally outweighs the benefits.

Longevity: The Arak are an incredibly long-lived, if not immortal, race. Loht and his sister Maeve are over five thousand years old, and the oldest known shadow elf is nearly three times that age. They do not age or die of natural causes, although they can be killed by violence. The longevity of the shadow elf race affects their culture in many ways, as might be expected. The most important of these is the attitude of Arak to marriage and children. Arak do not mate for life, although a shadow elf union may last for several centuries. An Arak couple usually has about one child each century. Arak also often take human lovers, and these arrangements are similarly temporary.

Heredity: The race of shadow elves ranges from tiny faerielike creatures like the alven and powrie to the sith and shee, who are as tall or taller than the average man. Children need not be of the same type as the parent, as a fey's appearance is determined by its personality and not the other way around. Thus, for example, a teg might give birth to a child who as she grows comes to resemble, and eventually become, a powrie, sith, or shee.

Arak, Alven

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Flowers, nectar
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13–14)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic good
NO. APPEARING:	2d4
ARMOR CLASS::	2
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 15 (A)
HIT DICE:	1
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1 point
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (3/3/1), wing dance (enthralls or cause blindness and deafness)
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to stone weapons, electricity, and lightning
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	75%
SIZE:	T (1′ tall)
MORALE:	Unsteady (5–7)
XP VALUE:	1,400

The alven are a diminutive race of winged Arak easily mistaken for fairies, pixies, and other such creatures. They are fond of flowers and plants, having great skill as farmers and gardeners.

Adult alven stand between ten and fourteen inches in height and have butterflylike wings. Their skin is a leafy green in color, and their bright orange hair has earned them the nicknames "carrot-tops" and "fire flits." Alven favor light, silky clothes made from spider's silk, which they dye shades of orange and green.

Alven have the ability to change themselves into both bumblebees and butterflies (most prefer the latter). They can spend up to twelve hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, as long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period. When encountered, they are often found cavorting in butterfly-form.

The alven speak the language of all shadow elves, although they do so with a sing-song lilt. Their voices are soft and high-pitched, so listeners must pay close attention.

Combat: These tiny creatures avoid physical combat whenever possible. When called upon to defend themselves, they generally rely on their magical abilities. If someone actually gets close enough to attack, alven employ pinlike daggers and swords that inflict one point of damage per attack.

Alven cast spells of the plant sphere as if they were 5th-level clerics.

When called upon to defend themselves, alven flit about in apparently random patterns, dodging and interweaving. Anyone who looks upon this "wing dance" must make two saving throws vs. spell. Failure of the first leaves the viewer *enthralled*, as per the spell. Failure of the second causes him or her to be instantly stricken both deaf and blind (as per the spells *deafness* and *blindness*).

Only cold-wrought iron weapons or those of +3 or greater enchantment can harm fire flits. Also, they are immune to stone weapons (including obsidian), even if magical, and to lightning or electricity-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to the alven, whatever their form. Each round that an alven is exposed to direct sunlight, it suffers one point of damage, first its wings and then its skin burning and crackling. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to one point per turn.

The natural affinity that alven have for flowers, plants, and other growing things gives them the ability to travel freely and easily from place to place, actually being guided by the flora around them. When in such surroundings, these creatures act as if using a *find the path* spell. (This ability does not function in places devoid of plant life.) Alven also have superior infravision (120 feet) and keen senses of smell that enable them to detect invisible creatures within 120 feet.

Habitat/Society: The alven live in underground warrens beneath beautiful gardens or fields of wildflowers. They are vigilant defenders of their homes, quickly lashing out at those who pick the flowers without permission or damage their plants. It is said the best way to make friends with an alven is to compliment its garden or leave a gift of seeds. Presenting an alven with cut flowers, however, is insulting and sure to draw its wrath.

Ecology: Alven tend to the gardens and groves of the Arak. They specialize in night-blooming plants but are fond of all manner of growing things. The alven sometimes visit mortal realms to examine their gardens and hone their horticultural skills. If they find a person with an exceptionally green thumb, they may take him or her back to the Shadow Rift and transform him or her into a changeling.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Vegetarian (grains)
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13–14)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	4
MOVEMENT:	12 (2-legged) or 18 (4-legged)
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	16
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4+1 (fist or hoof)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (4/2/1), sleep, delusion
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to wooden weapons, cold, and ice magic
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	S (3′ tall)
MORALE:	Average (8–10)
XP VALUE:	3,000

Brag are a wild-eyed race of Arak who are fond of hard work, amusing tales, and skill in carpentry, stonework, and other such crafts.

Mature brag stand between thirty and thirty-six inches in height but are less stout and muscular as dwarves. Their hair, eyes, and fingernails are all a deep black, although their skin is an almost albino white. Brag wear their hair back in long tails that look very much like the mane of a horse. Most brag clothing is white, especially the kerchiefs they tie about their heads like caps.

Brag have the ability to change themselves into ponies. They can spend up to twelve hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, as long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period.

The brag speak their own language, which consists of nickering and snorting. They are skilled engineers and love to carry on very technical conversations about such matters as stoneworking, engineering, architecture, and the like.

Combat: Although fairly small in stature, brag are feisty and stubborn. They are not opposed to physical violence when needed and even enjoy wrestling and similar tests of strength. When brag enter into combat they either punch with their fists or turn into pony form and lash out with their hooves. Anyone struck in melee by a brag's fist or hoof must save vs. spell or suffer the delusion that he or she is a horse (the hero walks on all fours and makes all attacks with his or her "hooves"); the character is allowed a new saving throw each day at a cumulative –1 penalty.

Like all races of Arak, the brag have magical abilities and can cast spells from the abjuration school as if they were 5th-level mages.

The piercing black eyes of a brag can have a most distressing effect on mortals. If the Arak desires it, any human or demihuman who meets the gaze of a brag must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *sleep* spell (normal resistance still applies).

Only leather weapons (such as whips) or those of +2 or greater enchantment can harm brag. They are altogether immune to wooden weapons, even if magical, and to cold or ice-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to brag in either form. Each round that a brag is exposed to direct sunlight, it suffers two points of damage, its skin burning and crackling. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to two points per turn.

Brag are skilled climbers, a talent very useful in their role as laborers and builders. Because of this, they are able to climb walls per the thief skill, with a 75% chance of success. Brag also have superior infravision (120 feet).

Habitat/Society: The brag live in whitewashed cottages made from stone, with an adjoining structure that serves as a workshop for the family group. Cairns often mark the boundaries of a brag's property, although low stone fences are not uncommon. All brag stonework is unmortered. The best way to befriend a brag is to show it an architectural secret it did not know before—for example, how a flying buttress works. They reward their friends with very potent brag ale.

Ecology: The brag are a race of builders and laborers. In the regions around the Shadow Rift, especially in Tepest, a difficult task (like a barn-raising) is described as brag-work.

The brag occasionally make forays into human villages to steal tools or building supplies. If these things are easy to obtain, they simply take them and leave. If they are locked away and difficult to get at, the brag ransack the place. Sometimes they scrutinize buildings under construction, either aiding or hindering the work depending on their respect (or lack of it) for the workmanship. Many a dependable craftsman has left a job half-finished at nightfall, only to find it finished at sunrise.

On occasion, a clan of brag capture a human carpenter or builder who has shown himself or herself to be of exceptional skill. Such folk are brought into the Shadow Rift and made into changelings.

Arak, Fir

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15–16)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	4
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4+1 (fingers)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (4/2/1), charm, confusion, mechanical devices
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to stone weapons, cold, and ice
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	S (3′ tall)
MORALE:	Average (8–10)
XP VALUE:	3,000

The fir are a clever, cunning breed who are fascinated by clockwork, machinery, and other works of precision and engineering. They are tinkers and inventors who delight in fine work and quality craftsmanship.

In their humanoid form, fir are a slender, almost spritelike race of Arak with very, very long fingers so thin that they taper almost to needle-like points. They are noted for their wide intelligent eyes, pale skin, and long silver hair. Fir dress in various shades of purple, ranging from indigo to violet.

Fir have the ability to change themselves into hedgehogs. They can spend up to twelve hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, so long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period.

The fir are fluent in the common language of all Arak. They tend to speak in long, flowery prose, especially when discussing craftsmanship and inventions.

Combat: Fir are not skilled warriors, having almost no interest in warfare or battle (although they are fascinated by catapults and other engines of war). When forced to enter battle, they stab with their long pointed fingers for 1d4+1 points of damage. Usually, however, they either rely on others to protect them or else use small mechanical devices (small clockwork men, wind-up attack birds, booby traps, and the like) to occupy their attackers while they escape. None of these devices, if captured, works for anyone but the fir.

A fir's conversation is often defense enough. Anyone listening to one go on and on about some projected design must successfully save vs. spell or suffer *confusion* as per the spell. (The DM is encouraged to roleplay this effect by babbling on and on disjointedly.)

The eyes of a fir constantly sparkle and twinkle with magical light. In most cases, this is merely a fascinating characteristic to observe. When the fir wishes, however, the glint in its eye can *charm person* (per the spell) in order to ensure a captive audience. Anyone who meets the fir's gaze must make a successful saving throw vs. spell to avoid its effects. A character so charmed will be forced to endure hour after hour of the fir's excruciatingly detailed description of some clockwork project the fir has not yet quite perfected.

In addition, fir can cast spells of the creation and guardian spheres as 5th-level clerics.

Only tin weapons or those with a +2 or greater enchantment can harm fir. Also, they are immune to stone weapons, even if magical, and cold- or ice-based attacks.

Fir are quite sensitive to direct sunlight. Each round of exposure causes it to suffer two points of damage, its skin burning and crackling while it wails in agony. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to two points per turn.

The fir are a breed of skilled craftsmen, able to easily repair complex devices like clocks and watches. They sometimes create clockwork men to aid them in their work by lifting and carrying; these typically are made of brass and have AC 5 and 2 HD. Fir also have superior infravision (120 feet), and their nimble fingers give them a 75% chance to pick pockets.

Habitat/Society: Fir live in homes made of many small, multi-level compartments, each littered with tools, gears, and diagrams. Typically these dwellings are in hollowed-out trees or in underground cavern complexes. They are always very well-hidden (90% camouflage).

Fir alternate between two states; an intent working phase when they labor nonstop and a ruminating stage when they meditate on their next project.

Ecology: Fir will eat almost anything. When working, they rarely notice what it is and may skip meals for days at a time. When in meditative mode, they prefer slugs above all else but will also eat grubs, worms, bugs, and other such small fry.

From time to time, a fir will make its way into the mortal lands in hopes of stealing small devices, tools, or parts. If these expeditions bring to their attention a craftsman of unusual talent, he or she may be brought back to the Shadow Rift and made into a changeling.

Arak, Muryan (Dancing Men)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13–14)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2d4
ARMOR CLASS::	2
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6 (by weapon)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (4/2/1), dance, slow, deafness, blindness
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to wooden weapons, lightning, and electricity
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	M (5′ tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
XP VALUE:	5,000

Muryan are the warriors of Arak society. Both violent and aggressive, these creatures are known both for the bloodthirsty, berserk rages that overtake them in battle and the smooth grace in which they conduct them.

A muryan stands as tall as a man, with the finely muscled limbs of an athlete. They are often clad in gray cloaks and kilts and have wild hair that tangles and coils about their head almost like the asps of a medusa. No muryan is ever seen without a weapon on his or her person or close at hand.

Muryan have the ability to change themselves into ferrets. They can spend up to three hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, as long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period.

The muryan are a tight-lipped folk, although they speak the language of the shadow elves as well as any other breed of Arak. In battle, the Dancing Men sometimes hum pleasantly, a trait which can unnerve their enemies.

Combat: Muryan are quick to enter battle, although they do not do so needlessly. When attacking, they depend upon wickedly-curving scimitars and slender long bows, both of which inflict 1d6 points of damage. Muryan depend more upon ferocity in combat than tactics.

Anyone struck by the muryan in melee must make two saving throws vs. spell. Failure of the first causes the hero to begin to "dance," suffering a –4 penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class. Often the muryan will match its movements to those of its battle-partner in an eerie dance of death. Failure of the second causes the person struck to be struck blind, as if targeted by a *blindness* spell.

In addition, anyone within 30 feet of a fighting muryan must make two more saving throws vs. spell. Failure of the first causes that character to be *slowed* for the duration of the combat, while failing the second renders the target deaf, as if struck by a *deafness* spell.

These abilities, plus their undoubted battle-prowess, make the Dancing Men terrible foes indeed, from whom more than one battle-hardened adventurer has fled at second sight. If this were not enough, muryan can cast spells from the school of invocation/evocation as 5th-level mages.

Only mithral weapons or those with a +1 or greater enchantment can harm muryan; they are immune to wooden weapons, even if magical, and to lightning- or electricity-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is very harmful to the muryan in either form. When a dancing man is exposed to direct sunlight, he or she must successfully save vs. spell or begin to thrash about wildly, suffering three points of damage per round as its hair burns and its skin smolders and crackles. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to three points per turn.

Because of their knowledge of traps and ambushes, the muryan have mastered the ability to find and remove traps (per thief ability) with a 75% chance of success. Muryan also have superior infravision (120 feet).

Habitat/Society: The muryan are quick to attack if they see a chance to hone their battle-skills. They care little for the rules of war that humans seem to be fond of and often adopt tactics that human generals consider barbaric or uncivilized. They respect worthy opponents, however, and may hold back in combat in order to study their foe's tactics and technique.

Ecology: Muryan are eerily graceful in battle, striking with extreme grace and deadly intent. When a warrior of great skill is defeated in battle, he or she may be spared so that the hero can be taken back to the Shadow Rift and made into a changeling.

Arak, Portune

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17–18)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS::	–2
MOVEMENT:	3
HIT DICE:	2
THACO:	18
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d2 + special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (3/3/1), fumble, mortifying wound
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to wooden weapons, heat, and fire
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	45%
SIZE:	T (6˝ tall)
MORALE:	Unreliable (2–4)
XP VALUE:	3,000

The portune are a somber and scholarly breed of shadow elf who practice medicine and healing. They are skilled alchemists, a trait that carries over and makes them fine cooks, masterful vintners, and excellent herbalists. Portune are especially fond of clever wordplay.

They very rarely take their humanoid forms, but when they do portune are tiny black-skinned creatures with mothlike wings who never stand more than six inches in height. They have white hair, white eyes devoid of irises or pupils, and slender fingers.

Portune spend most of their time in animal form, either as turtles (the males) or asps (the females). They can remain in these forms for as long as they want, sometimes not resuming their true shapes for years.

Portune speak the common language of all the Arak, but because of their interest in word games and languages odd quirks they also tend to speak at least a little bit of a dozen or more other languages, from the arcane to the mundane.

Combat: Portune dislike violence, no doubt because of their role as healers, and usually withdraw if threatened. Still, when forced to defend themselves, they can deliver small bites that do not heal, even with the application of clerical spells; only a *wish*, or the ministrations of the portune who inflicted the injury, will close the wound. In addition, anyone attacking a portune must successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fumble*.

Portune can cast spells of the healing sphere as if they were 5th-level clerics.

Only copper weapons or those of +3 or greater enchantment can harm a portune. Also, they are immune to wooden weapons, even if magical, and to heat or fire-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to the portune in either form. A portune exposed to direct sunlight suffers one point of damage every other round, its shell or scales smoldering. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to one point every other turn.

All portune are skilled herbalists, a talent that enables them to detect poisons (as per the spell of that name) with a 75% chance of success. In addition, they have great knowledge of medicinal plants and can cure almost any disease or condition, including poisoning. (The males carry these herbs with them in or on their shells, the females stash them nearby where they can be quickly fetched if needed.) Portune have poor vision and infravision but very keen hearing.

Habitat/Society: The portune are wanderers who may be encountered in almost any terrain as they pursue various "research projects." They tend to make their homes in marshy regions where many of the strange and interesting plants and fungi they work with can be readily gathered. They dig small burrows in small patches of higher ground, often concealed by clusters of cattails. A portune home is likely to have a nest of friendly vipers nearby, acting both as protectors and a source of (medicinal) venom.

Ecology: Portune are compassionate people who do not like to see others suffer. When they find wounded humans and demihumans, they always pause to do what they can for them. They occasionally make forays into human lands on one of their research projects or to study human medicine. If a skilled healer comes to their attention, they may take up residence in his or her home to study this mortal's craft. If they are impressed, the fir may either teach him or her some herblore or bring the person back to the Shadow Rift to become a changeling.

Arak, Powrie (Redcaps)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13–14)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d4
ARMOR CLASS::	2
MOVEMENT:	9, fly 15 (A)
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1 point (dagger) or 1d4 (bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (4/2/1), fear, backstab, shriek
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to steel weapons, electricity, and lightning
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	45%
SIZE:	T (1′ tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17–18)
XP VALUE:	5,000

The powrie are evil and sinister creatures who delight in violence, murder, and cruel torture. Skillful assassins and masterful spies, they prosper in the Shadow Rift under the rule of Loht, acting as his eyes and ears.

Powrie are a spritelike race with wiry beards, feral teeth, and snakelike eyes. They have wasplike wings and wear caps dyed red with the blood of past victims. Most powrie wear scarlet or crimson tunics and long sashes that can be used as strangling cords or garrotes.

Powrie have the ability to change themselves into red wasps, hornets, or any other similar small flying, stinging insect (dirt dobbers, ichneumon wasp, etc.). They can spend up to three hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, as long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period.

Powrie are insulting and offensive, even to their allies. For that reason, those of foul temperament are often said to have the voice of a powrie or a red tongue.

Combat: The powrie love violence and mayhem, using keen-edged daggers that inflict one point of damage or biting with their needlelike teeth for 1d4 points of damage. Anyone bit by a powrie must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or go blind (per the *blindness* spell). The powrie can also emit a high-pitched shriek, causing all within thirty feet to make a successful saving throw vs. spell or go deaf (per the *deafness* spell).

The mouth of a powrie is filled with needlelike teeth that give it a most menacing countenance. In battle, these creatures can contort their features into a maniacal grin before opening their mouths impossibly wide, requiring anyone within thirty feet who sees this to successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fear* spell.

Powrie can cast spells from the illusion/phantasm school as 5th-level mages.

Only platinum weapons or those of +3 or greater enchantment can harm powrie. They are immune to steel weapons (which includes most normal weapons), even if magical, and lightning or electricity-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to the powrie in either form. Each round that a redcap is exposed to direct sunlight, it suffers one point of damage, its skin burning and crackling. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to one point per turn.

Powrie are skilled assassins and have mastered the thief's ability to backstab, performing this action as 5th-level thieves and inflicting triple damage when successful. Because of the diminutive size of their weapons, they always backstab with blades treated with type-O poison. Powrie also have superior infravision (120 feet).

Habitat/Society: The powrie live in small paper houses much like large wasp nests. They enter and exit these dwellings through small holes, requiring them to assume insect form. The inside of a powrie nest is cluttered with souvenirs from the bodies of their victims.

Ecology: The powrie are deadly predators who are relentless in their attacks, allowing nothing to stop them.

From time to time, the powrie come upon a particularly despicable rogue or mercenary. Should such a character proves himself or herself to be utterly base, he or she is taken back to the Shadow Rift and transformed into a changeling.

Arak, Shee

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15–16)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1d3
ARMOR CLASS::	6
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	7
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 (elfshot)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (4/3/2/1), charm, fumble
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to stone weapons, fire, and heat
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE:	5,000

The shee dominate the Maeve's Seelie Court, and Maeve herself is Princess of the Shee as well as Faerie Queen. They are the most artistic of all the shadow elves, loving music, poetry, and performances of all kind.

The shee stand slightly taller than the average human, although their slender and graceful builds make them weigh far less. They are the fairest of all the fey, with pale hair, amber eyes, and very light, almost milky-white, skin. They wear silky, flowing clothes of medieval or renaissance design, always carefully chosen for best effect.

All shee have the ability to change themselves into birds; they typically choose nightingales or other songbirds, or swans if they have great distances to journey. They can spend up to eight hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, as long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period. They never take the forms of owls, birds of prey, or carrion-birds, preferring more elegant avians.

Shee speak the language of the shadow elves, but their voices are always melodious and soft. They never seem to lose their temper or become panicked, always speaking in calm, measured tones.

Combat: Shee do whatever they can to avoid a fight. If pressed into battle, they use slender, rapierlike swords and elegant bows that inflict 1d8 points of damage and force the target to successfully save vs. spell or suffer a *curse.*

The kiss of a shee is highly magical and requires the recipient to make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *charm person* spell that is permanent until the shee decides to release his or her victim.

Anyone who directs a melee or missile (but not magical) attack at a shee must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer the influence of a *fumble* spell. Importantly, this ability takes effect before determining the attack's success.

Shee are experts at enchantments of all types and can cast enchantment/charm spells as if they were 7th-level mages. Targets of these spells suffer a –2 penalty to their saving throws.

Only lead weapons or those of +1 or greater enchantment can harm shee. Also, they are immune to stone weapons, even if magical, and heat- or fire-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to the shee in either avian or humanoid form. Each round that a shee is exposed to direct sunlight, he or she suffers three points of damage, his or her flawless skin or well-preened feathers burning and crackling. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to three points per turn.

The shee are masterful storytellers and serve as the keepers of history and lore for the Arak. As such, they have a vast store of knowledge to draw on. Thus, a shee has a 75% chance to know something about any given person, place, or object found in the Shadow Rift or its neighboring domains. Shee also have superior infravision (120 feet).

Habitat/Society: The shee are often perceived as singers and entertainers, but their role in Arak culture is actually more important than that. The shee serve as the keepers of shadow elf history and lore, a role they fell into during the centuries that their race served under the dark sorcerer-fiend Gwydion.

Shee generally make their homes at hearts of oak copses. These places are always brightly lit, elegantly furnished, and stocked with scrolls, books, and other valuable records of history and lore, plus at least one musical instrument.

Ecology: The shee often travel in the lands of mortals, hoping to hear stories and songs to bring back to their people. More than any other Arak, shee are fond of humans and indeed often take mortal lovers. Indeed, on rare occasions they have even married humans.

When the shee meet a particularly enthralling storyteller, they may bring him or her back to the Shadow Rift and transform him or her into a changeling.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17–18)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	0
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	7
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8/1d8/1d8 (needle-sharp rapier)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (4/3/2/1), gaze, fear aura
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Parry, +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to steel weapons, fire, and heat
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	6,000

Under the rule of Loht, the sith have risen to power and prominence among the fey of the Shadow Rift. Their love of darkness and fascination with death makes them the most sinister of the Arak.

Sith are the tallest of the shadow elves, standing just over six feet in height. They are extremely gaunt, however, and so pale skinned as to look disturbingly like undead but for the smoothness and grace of their movements. Their hair is always pure, snowy white, while their clothes are generally black and somber, highlighted with dark yellow sashes or scarves. Sith are extremely fastidious and always immaculately dressed.

Sith have the ability to change themselves into shadows—not the monsters but perfect replicas of a normal shadow like those cast by player characters. They can stay in this form indefinitely, and of the older sith indeed have so merged with the shadows that they no longer take corporeal form at all.

The sith are able to speak the language of all the shadow elves, of course, but always speak in a quiet, somber whispers. Some find their gentle voices far more disturbing than the shouts of the muryan or powrie. Sith also have a very morbid sense of humor ("graveyard humor") that many find unsettling.

Combat: The sith dislike battles, for they are messy and chaotic affairs. When forced into battle, they can attack with blinding speed, gaining three attacks every round. Any or all of these can be used to parry instead of thrust, with a successful "attack" roll on the sith's part negating a melee or missile attack by an opponent. Sith prefer slender, gentlemanly weapons like sword canes, foils, and rapiers, inflicting 1d8 points of damage per strike.

At will, the sith can radiate a magical aura that imposes images of death on the minds of their enemies. This power affects every living creature within thirty feet, causing them to make immediate fear checks. In addition, the piercing gaze of these unwholesome creatures can break the nerve of anyone who meets their gazes (successfully save vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *fumble* spell).

Sith can cast spells from the school of necromancy as if they were 7th-level mages.

Only silver weapons or those of +1 or greater enchantment can harm sith. Also, they are immune to steel weapons (which includes most normal weapons), even if magical, and to heat- or fire-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is dangerous to the sith, as for all shadow elves. Each round that a sith is exposed to direct sunlight, he or she suffers three points of damage, the skin literally boiling off the bones. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to three points per turn.

The sith are a naturally reserved and quiet race. Thus, they have a 75% chance to move silently, as per the thief ability. Sith also have superior infravision (120 feet).

Habitat/Society: The sith dominate the Unseelie Court (and hence Arak society) and serve Loht faithfully. With his backing, they have become the current masters of the Shadow Rift. Needless to say, their macabre bearing and sinister thoughts have begun to taint all aspects of Arak life.

Sith make their solitary homes in neolithic-style chambers inside barrows, sometimes planted round with copses of yew trees. Before inhabiting such a place, however, they must first bury alive a human there, only taking up residence after he or she has expired.

Ecology: Sith have a great respect for the dead and their places of rest, often decorating their homes with bones or remnants of departed friends, foes, or allies. They even pause after battle to bury or otherwise dispose of the bodies of their enemies. They find the powrie lust for death and killing offensive and the teg beneath contempt.

When the sith travel into the mortal lands, they visit places of death and burial. When they come upon someone who has been left alone in the world due to the death of a loved one, they sometimes spirit the grieving one away and make him or her into a changeling.

Arak, Teg

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13–14)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d10
ARMOR CLASS::	4
MOVEMENT:	6, burrow 12
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4 (claws or bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells (3/3/1), grab, howl
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better magical weapon to hit; immune to wooden weapons, cold, and ice
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	S (3′ tall)
MORALE:	Average (8–10)
XP VALUE:	3,000

The teg are a feral race of shadow elves. They are wild and difficult to control, ever-eager to indulge their own animalistic desires and needs. Teg run wild and are often encountered with foxes and other clever, sly hunting beasts.

The teg are small and slender but not frail by any means. They have long, pointed ears and wide face with foxlike features, large hands with wide-spread, claw-tipped fingers, evil grins that reveal pointed teeth, and the gold-flecked, emerald eyes of a cat. Their clothes are almost always shades of muddy green, which enables them to conceal themselves in the soil or foliage when stalking or when planning an ambush.

Teg have the ability to change themselves into foxes. They can spend up to six hours a day in this form, changing back and forth at will, as long as they do not exceed the total duration in any twenty-four hour period.

The teg are fluent in the common language of all Arak, but seldom speak it, preferring to use their own language of grunts, hisses, howls, and other animal sounds to communicate. Teg can speak freely with any animals normally found in temperate forests and grasslands.

Combat: Teg enjoy hunting more than the actual act of killing. As such, they often play with an enemy before moving in for the kill. When the teg do attack, they spring from cover, biting and clawing for 1d4 points of damage. Their favorite tactic is to burrow up beneath their prey, suddenly seizing an opponent, and then dragging him or her down below the ground where the whole pack can attack the hapless character at once.

As they attack, the teg often howl in exultation. This wild, haunting sound is so unnerving that it causes all those within thirty feet of the creature to make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell.

Teg can cast spells from the animal sphere as if they were 5th-level clerics.

Only gold weapons or those with a +2 or greater enchantment can harm teg. They are immune to wooden weapons, even if magical, and to cold- or ice-based attacks.

Exposure to direct sunlight is harmful to the teg, as for all shadow elves. For each round of exposure, the teg suffers two points of damage, its skin burning and crackling. If the light is filtered, as on a cloudy or overcast day, the damage slows to two points per turn.

As skilled hunters, the teg have mastered the ability to hide in shadows (per the thief ability). When they practice this art, they have a 75% chance of success. The teg often use this ability to lie in wait prior to an ambush or the start of a hunt. Teg also have superior infravision (120 feet).

Habitat/Society: Teg make their homes in treetops, using long knotted ropes to ascend and descend from their roosts. Invariably, a fox den can be found at the base of the tree, and the animals who live there are under the charm of the teg.

Ecology: The teg are hunters by nature, stalking animals for meat and hides. They delight in killing, but even more they rejoice in the hunt. The longer a prey eludes them, the greater their joy at the hunt and the deeper their satisfaction when it is at last brought down.

The teg visit the mortal world only for the hunting. When they come across a hunter who lives for the chase and shares their taste for bloodletting, they sometimes bring him or her back to the Shadow Rift and transform him or her into a changeling—if he or she can survive their stalking for an entire night.

Changeling (Kin)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Faerie food
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral or as Arak
NO. APPEARING:	1 or 2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	10
MOVEMENT:	9 or better
HIT DICE:	3+2
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or better
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Varies
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to *charm* and *hold* spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19–20)
XP VALUE:	35 and up

Changelings are people who have fallen under the spells of the shadow elves. When an Arak creates a changeling, he or she takes the person's shadow, leaving behind the body, which continues to perform its daily duties in an imitation of its former existence. These husks all wear distant, glazed expressions, like sleepwalkers, and their eyes seem remote and dull, showing no spark of intelligence or imagination. In fact, these empty shells will not even defend themselves if attacked. In domains like Tepest and Nova Vaasa, these husks are known by many names; the most common of these are the elf-shot and shadow-reft.

The removed shadow (or changeling) lives on in the Shadow Rift, working to further perfect its craft and serve the Arak. In fact, the changeling is so completely engrossed in its work that it rarely thinks of anything else.

Changelings are drawn from all walks of life, with their dress and mannerisms dictated by their origins. These creatures know any languages that they knew in life, although they speak in flat tones with no hint of emotion.

Combat: Few changelings have any interest or skill in combat, except those transformed by the muryan, teg, or powrie. Most take no action to defend themselves even when attacked. The special abilities of the most common breeds of changelings are presented later in this entry. The numbers are given represent "unaligned" changelings; for those claimed by one of the Nine Breeds, use the ones detailed below as models.

Habitat/Society: Changelings are created by the various races of Arak. While most men and women would consider the transformation into a changeling a curse, the shadow elves view it as a reward.

The process by which a changeling is created robs it of all personality and imagination. Only the characteristics relating to its craft remain unaffected. Because of this removal of all distractions, the quality of a changeling's work exceeds that of a normal human. At the very least, an item created by a changeling is worth three times the value of a similar object made by a master craftsman. A changeling weaponsmith, for example, makes swords so perfect that they are treated as +2 weapons (although they lack any magical enchantment).

Shadow elves cannot create a changeling unless the participant gives his or her consent through willingly eating faerie food. It is worth noting that almost all Arak believe they are doing these folk a favor by transforming them and cannot understand why anyone would pass up the chance to leave their dull, brief mortal lives behind to come and live with the shadow elves. They look upon the process as a means of making a master craftsman even more skillful. While this is certainly true, the cost generally outweighs the benefits.

Ecology: To create a changeling, an Arak must sever the subject's shadow from his or her body. This process requires the subject's consent, which is typically given through eating faerie food. (Tepestani refer to this morsel as "faerie cake.") The mortal need not understand the consequences of this act for it to take effect.

Shortly after someone takes a bite of faerie cake, he or she becomes drowsy and falls asleep. While in this magical slumber, the shadow elf illuminates the area with a magical black candle and sprinkles the body with ebony-colored dust. As the dust drifts down over the sleeping victim, the Arak slices off his or her shadow with a silver sickle and packs it into a small sack.

Before the candle burns down completely (which takes roughly five hours), the freshly harvested shadow must be taken into the Shadow Rift. If the candle is extinguished, either intentionally or through the passing of time, the stolen shadow returns immediately to its owner. While the candle burns, the victim cannot be awakened; only snuffing the flame restores consciousness.

Changeling (Kin)

As soon as the shadow is brought across the borders of the Arak kingdom, it assumes the shape of the person from whom it was cut. In that instant, back in the mortal world the candle flame flickers out and the victim's body rises, zombielike, to go about his or her daily affairs. The being that was formerly a mere shadow then comes to life, immediately ready to carry out the instructions of the Arak who carried it into the Shadow Rift. The lot of the changeling is simple enough: It is given the tools of its chosen trade and set to work.

Alvenkin

Changelings created by the alven are inoffensive farmers, gardeners, and horticulturalists. To be sure, the flower beds and groves of the alvenkin are nothing less than miraculous. Alvenkin are not hostile, making no effort to defend themselves or their work.

Bragkin

While the changelings created by the brag are generally strong (the better to shift stonework), they never use their might for anything other than manual labor. Bragkin do the majority of the building and structural repair work in the Shadow Rift. The buildings erected by the bragkin are masterpieces of design, as much works of art as functional structures, and each is an experiment incorporating some new architectural idea.

Firkin

These changelings are skilled craftsmen who tend to all the intricate machinery found in the Arak lands. Timepieces and the like created by the firkin are masterpieces that function reliably and flawlessly. Although the firkin are not suited for combat, they sometime set traps and alarms. These are so skillfully crafted that any person attempting to find or disarm them suffers a –25% penalty to his or her chances of success.

Muryankin

While most of the other changeling races are tame and inoffensive, the muryankin are deadly warriors. While less lethal than the Dancing Men, these berserkers are dangerous foes for the unwary. The muryankin defend the Shadow Rift and guard expeditions into the realms of mankind.

Changeling, Muryankin: AC 5; MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4 (bastard sword) or 1d8/1d8 (spear); SA battle frenzy (+2 on attack and damage rolls); SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CN; XP 270.
Personality: Chaotic and violent.

Portunekin

Those rare changelings spawned by the portune are the physicians of the Shadow Rift. They use their medical skills to care for the other changelings and even the Arak themselves. Any wounded person brought before the portunekin is tended to at once. A wounded individual under the care of these changelings heals from his or her injuries at three times the normal rate.

Powriekin

Like their masters, the powriekin are stealthy assassins and spies. They are often sent into the world of mankind to carry out specific missions vital to the interests of Loht and the denizens of the Shadow Rift. These changelings are seldom encountered, for they sneak about, moving silently and hiding in shadows.

Changeling, Powriekin: AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d3/1d3/1d3 (darts); SA type-O poison on dagger and darts, backstab (+4 attack, 3× damage); SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, move silently (75%), hide in shadows (75%); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CE; XP 270.
Personality: Cunning and sadistic.

Sheekin

The sheekin are entertainers who perform for the shadow elves. When telling tales and singing songs, they can be as animated as any bard. As soon as they have finished their performance, however, they fall silent and become more or less inert.

Sithkin

Those who have seen the sithkin describe them as gaunt, silent figures, pale and lovely. Some have mistaken them for the walking dead, others for visions of death. The sithkin are not skilled warriors but can engage in combat at need. They are occasionally sent into the mortal world in order to obtain things associated with mortuaries and crypts. It is through the action of the sithkin that the saugh have been gathered. Sithkin move absolutely silently and never speak.

Changeling, Sithkin: AC 8; MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 9; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (sickle); SA spells, command undead; SD immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, undead friendship; MR 15%; SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int genius (17); AL LE; XP 270.
Notes: *Command Undead*—Sithkin can command undead as an evil priest of 7th level. *Undead friendship*—no undead of less than domain lord stature will ever attack a sithkin.
Personality: elegant but morbid.
Spells (3/2/1): chill touch (×3), *spectral hand* (×2), *vampiric touch.*

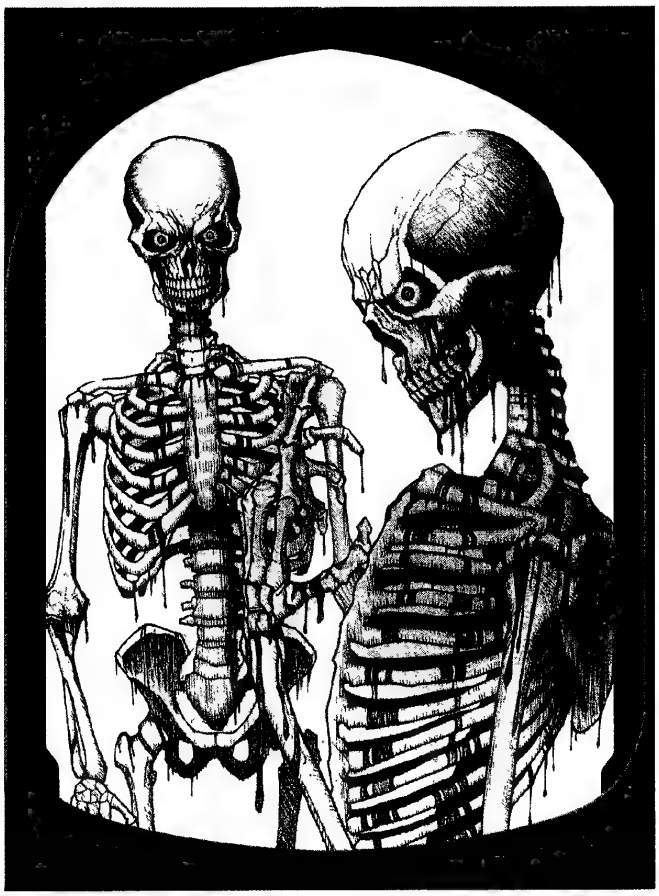
Tegkin

The tegkin are animalistic hunters. Thus, like the muryankin and powriekin, they can be dangerous enemies when encountered in battle. For the most part, however, they are encountered only when they are hunting for the animals who will find their way onto the tables of the Arak.

Changeling, Tegkin: AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (short bow); SA surprise (–2 penalty on enemy's surprise checks); SD immune to charm and hold spells, +2 bonus on surprise checks; SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (9); AL CN; XP 270.
Personality: Bestial and persistent.

Crimson Bones

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Non- (0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	1+3
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Blood poisoning
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Takes only half-damage from edged weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	270



These gruesome undead monsters are created when a human being (or similar demihuman) is flayed alive by an evil Arak. Usually, they are created by the ranks of the powrie and teg.

Crimson bones are very much like the common animated skeletons so often encountered in the Demiplane of Dread. The major difference between the crimson bones and a traditional skeleton, however, is that these unholy creatures constantly drip the rich, dark blood that flowed through their veins in life. Also, crimson bones retain the eyes of living men, not the empty sockets of animated skeletons.

Crimson bones cannot speak or even understand the words of others. They have no intelligence, existing only to kill in wild frenzies of blood and death. Even evil priests cannot master these chaotic undead. Only the sithkin and the use of certain magical spells, like *control undead*, can direct the actions of these creatures.

Combat: Crimson bones attack with speed and agility. While they are too mindless to attack with weapons, their bony fingers can rend flesh as easily a dagger might. Thus, in melee combat they inflict 1d4 points of damage per attack.

Like other undead skeletons, crimson bones are less vulnerable to damage from piercing and slashing weapons. Only bludgeoning attacks have their full effect upon these creatures; all other weapons inflict only half damage.

Whenever a crimson bones is hit with a melee weapon, blood splashes from the creature. An attacker has a 5% chance per point of damage inflicted of being struck by this spray. If this happens, the attacker must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or suffer from advanced blood poisoning. From that point on, he or she suffers one point of damage per round until he or she dies. This tainted blood can be affected by spells like *neutralize poison* and *slow poison*. Once a person's blood has been poisoned, additional exposure has no effect.

Crimson bones have no fear and are never called upon to make morale checks. Like all mindless undead, they are immune to life- and mind-affecting spells like *charm, sleep,* or *hold*. By the same token, poisons and disease do not affect these unliving monsters. Crimson bones can be turned as skeletons and suffer 1d4 points of damage if splashed with holy water or touched with a holy symbol.

Habitat/Society: These mindless creatures focus only on killing the living and flaying the flesh from their bones. Their only memories center on their terrible deaths and the evil Arak who killed them. Because of this, they attack teg or powrie in preference to other creatures.

Crimson bones move about in packs, hunting the living and seeking only to kill. They are unthinking predators, however, and can be trapped, avoided, or otherwise outsmarted without much difficulty by alert would-be victims.

Ecology: These creatures are the risen skeletons of men and women who have been flayed alive by the evil Arak of the Shadow Rift. They are not created purposely, rising spontaneously from the dead filled with hatred of the living and a lust for vengeance.

Grim

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any Ravenloft
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (9)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS::	0
MOVEMENT:	18 (black dog), 21 (cat), or fly 36 (A) (owl)
HIT DICE:	4 + 3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (black dog) or 3 (owl, cat)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d8 (bite) or 2d4/2d4/1d4+1 (talon/talon/beak) or 1d2/1d2/1d4 (claw/claw/bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Howl, surprise, turns undead
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Ethereal by day, never surprised, +1 or better magical weapon to hit, *protection from evil* aura, *detect evil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	25%
SIZE:	M (2' tall at shoulder)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	975

A grim is a guardian creature bound to a particular spot and charged with protecting it from all evil creatures. A grim never abandons its spot, even if it becomes dilapidated and desolate. It attacks any evil thing that enters its precinct, howling to warn of the approaching danger.

Grim can take three forms: that of a great black dog, a huge black cat, or a black owl. However, it must stay in the same form for an entire night, becoming ethereal at daybreak and waiting until nightfall before it can choose another form. Of course, in the Shadow Rift, sunrise never comes; hence any grim encountered here will be frozen in a single form. Of the three, the watchdog form is the most common and the cat the rarest.

Combat: While not as powerful as some creatures in the Shadow Rift, the grim is a determined opponent well able to drive off most trespassers. In dog form it can bite every round for 2d8 points of damage. In owl form it can swoop down, clawing and pecking at the faces of its foes; each talon does 2d4 points and the beak does 1d4+1. These attacks are generally aimed at the eyes of its opponent. In cat form it attacks with its front claws for 1d2 points each and bites for 1d4; if both claw attacks hit, then it rakes with its back claws for 1d3/1d3 additional points.

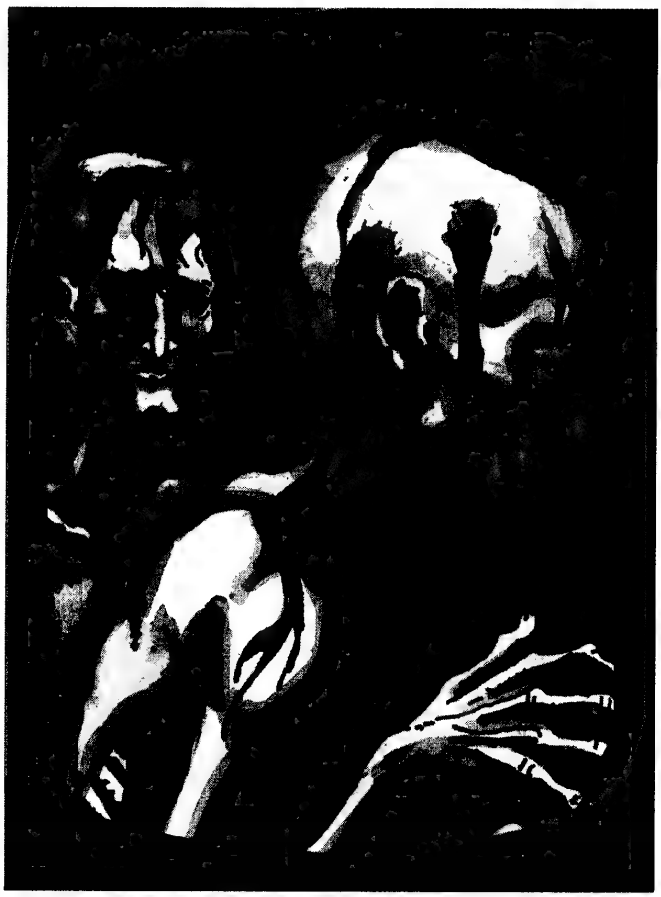
In addition to their physical attacks, grim are able to turn undead as if 9th-level clerics, gaining a +2 bonus to their rolls against evil extraplanar creatures. They can only be hit by magical weapons of +1 or greater bonus. Grim radiate a *protection from evil* aura with a radius of ten feet and can *detect evil* within seventy feet, even if disguised by some spell or magical item. Thus they are never surprised by evil creatures. Their semi-ethereal form and superior sense enable them to surprise opponents at double the normal chance of success. If it detects evil approaching, a grim gives voice with a ghostly but deep howl; evil creatures hearing this menacing yowl must check morale each round or flee.

Habitat/Society: Grim are solitary creatures so do not interact with others except in the pursuit of their duty. Most visitors to a site protected by a grim will never be aware of its presence. Those it saves find that it completely ignores them, although it will give warning if danger approaches and join in battle against any evil creatures who trespass. During daylight (in areas which have daylight, that is) they fade totally from view and become completely intangible, rematerializing the following sunset with any damage suffered the night before completely healed. The magic that summons and binds these creatures has long since been lost, and the sites most guard are now forgotten ruins. None are known to guard populated areas, and some have speculated that the constant presence of large numbers of people somehow breaks the spell that keeps these sleepless incorruptible guardians in place.

Ecology:
The grim exists only to fulfill its mission of ceaseless vigilance. It neither eats nor sleeps, and only harms evil creatures who trespass its boundaries. While heroes may find it a valuable unexpected ally, any interaction it has with others comes only when they impinge upon the rules that govern its existence.

Saugh, Dearg-Due

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	The Saugh (Loht's Army)
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Human blood
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 (headman's axe)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Choking cloud
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spell immunity
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	650



The saugh are an army of the dead created by Loht, Prince of the Sith, to serve him when he moves against the lands of mankind. The ghoulish dearg-due serve as the front ranks of this menacing army. Their true master is Gwydion, but Loht does not know that, and for now they obey his commands.

Dearg-due look much like living men, but they have grown gaunt with their time in the grave. While they are clearly undead creatures with flesh drawn tight across their features, they have not decayed in the slightest. The faces of dearg-due are unsettling, for their eyes have been plucked from their sockets, leaving only empty holes through which they somehow see.

Dearg-due are able to speak as they did in life, although their words are slurred and slow in forming. Few have ever conversed with these dark creatures, however, for they have little to do with mortals outside of combat.

Combat: Though dearg-due move about at the command of Loht, they are not mindless creatures. In fact, these cunning creatures often strike from hiding or under the guise of parlay.

In battle, the dearg-due wield great axes with broad blades that resemble those employed by an executioner at a beheading. They employ these weapons with great skill, inflicting 1d8 points of damage with each blow.

Though they can be hit by any sort of weapon, cold iron inflicts double damage on these vile creatures. Any blow that strikes a dearg-due is as dangerous to the attacker as it is to its target. When the skin of these fetid creatures is broken, a foul mist boils out from the wound in a five foot radius around the dearg-due. This acidic cloud burns the skin, eyes, and lungs of those within range. If the attacker fails a saving throw vs. breath weapon, he or she suffers a number of points of damage equal to half those inflicted on the dearg-due by his or her weapon (or normal damage if using cold iron); he or she suffers no damage on a successful save.

Being undead, dearg-due are immune to the effects of *charm, sleep, hold,* and other life- and mind-affecting spells. Similarly, diseases and toxins have no power over them.

Habitat/Society: These horrifying creatures dwell in and around the mountain which holds the Obsidian Gate, guarding this structure for their dark master. As stated above, Loht believes that this army, created by his sith and sithkin, is his to command, but this state of affairs lasts only until Gwydion returns.

Ecology: Though they need not eat to survive, these creatures delight in feeding on the flesh of corpses. After battle, the dearg-due ravenously consume all casualties.

Saugh, Gossamer

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Shadow Rift
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	The Saugh (Loht's Army)
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Life energy
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS::	0
MOVEMENT:	fly 12 (A)
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8 (touch)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Surprise, energy drain
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 or better magical weapon to hit, spell immunities, wraithform
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	2,000

Gossamers are spectral creatures that feed upon the life energy of their victims. They are counted among Loht's host of the dead, or saugh. Although they are not uncommon in the dark corners of the Shadow Rift, they are seldom encountered in the mortal world above.

A gossamer appears as an elongated, distorted image of its form in life. Transparent and shimmering, the spirit drifts about as if carried on the wind while wisps of vapor and curls of light encircle it.

Gossamers can speak just as they did in life, so most of them are fluent in the common language of their homeland. All of their words, however, are hollow and haunting. They seldom speak with mortals unless compelled to do so by magical means.

Combat: Gossamers take full advantage of their ghostly nature when engaging in combat. They swoop about, dart through solid walls, and plunge into the ground, if it serves to confuse their enemies.

Gossamers often lurk beneath the ground, waiting for their victims to pass overhead. When they hear talking or otherwise sense the presence of living creatures, they soar from the earth and attack. When attacking in this fashion, a –2 penalty is imposed on the enemy's surprise roll.

The primary attack of a gossamer is its energy-draining touch. A successful attack roll by the gossamer indicates that it swoops through the body of its enemy. In so doing, it inflicts 1d8 points of damage and drains away 1 point of the target's Constitution. Victims regain lost Constitution points at a rate of one point per day.

Each Constitution point absorbed by a gossamer allows it to regenerate a number of hit points. The number of points regained is determined by rolling a die of the same type that the victim uses to determine his or her hit point total. Thus, draining a point from a warrior allows the gossamer to regain 1d10 points while a drained wizard restores only 1d4 points.

Gossamers are ethereal creatures with no physical forms. Normal weapons, no matter how well crafted, are useless against them. They can be hit by only +1 or better magical weapons. In addition, as undead creatures, gossamers are immune to all manner of mind and life-affecting magic. They cannot be affected by *charm, sleep, hold,* or similar spells. Poisons, diseases, and similar mortal hazards do not endanger the gossamer either.

Habitat/Society: The gossamer is counted among the saugh, Loht's army of undead creatures. They assemble when and where he orders and carry out whatever instructions he gives them. When they are not so needed by the lord of the Arak, the gossamer are consigned to the Black Marsh in the Shadow Rift. However, unknown to Loht they are actually controlled by Gwydion exerting his influence from inside the Obsidian Gate and their first loyalty is to the shadow-fiend; they obey Loht's orders only so long as it pleases their true master for them to do so. Should Gwydion escape, the gossamer and all the saugh revert directly to his control.

Ecology: Like most undead, these spirits have little effect upon world of the living. The corpses that they have left behind, however, can be used as a means to destroy them. If the body from which a gossamer's spirit is drawn is cast into a fire of yew wood, the ghost is destroyed in 3d4 rounds. During this time, the gossamer feels great pain and tries to do all the harm it can before finally being annihilated.

Treant, Evil (Blackroot)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tepest
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11)
TREASURE:	Qx5, X
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS::	0
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	12 (84 hit points)
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4d6/4d6 (branches)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Animate trees, spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (18' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	14,000

The domain of Tepest has long suffered under the evil of the three hags who rule it. Their wickedness has seeped into the land, permeating it and poisoning even the plants and beasts of the forests. Perhaps the most awful example of this corrupting taint is the dreaded Blackroot. This evil treant dwells southwest of Lake Kronov, near the border of the Shadow Rift. None who pass through these woods do so without attracting his notice and, if care is not taken, his wrath.

Blackroot stands just over eighteen feet tall and looks like an ancient oak. His bark is grooved and rough, providing excellent protection from physical attacks. His branches are long and gnarled, never sprouting leaves or showing even the faintest hints of bud or blossom. When he wishes to be seen for what he is, a gnarled face appears to form out of the fissures and grooves of his bark. A great and terrible maw, shaped like an inverted V, opens up beneath two knotty eyes.

Blackroot, like most treants of any alignment, is able to speak with the animals of the forest. His evil is so pervasive, however, that the traditionally neutral animals of the forest near him have become neutral evil. Thus, even the most innocent creature in Blackroot's realm can be a potential enemy. Blackroot speaks the languages of Tepest and each of its neighboring domains. He seems to have no understanding of writing, not recognizing it as a form of communication.

Combat: Those who enter the forest attempting to destroy Blackroot are seldom seen again. If they are not destroyed by the wilderness which he commands, they

usually perish in combat with this ancient, evil creature when they find him. Blackroot can attack twice per combat round, inflicting 4d6 points of damage with each blow that strikes its target. His tremendous strength and mass is such that it enables him to crumple even plate armor as easily as if it were cardboard.

Blackroot's thick bark provides him with excellent protection from most attacks. However, his plantlike biology makes him very vulnerable to attacks made with magical or mundane fire. Any weapon or spell that employs fire gains a +4 bonus on the attack and inflicts an extra +1 point of damage per die. In addition, Blackroot suffers a –4 penalty on all saving throws against fire-based attacks.

Because of this vulnerability, Blackroot quickly attempts to destroy anyone who is careless with fires in his woods. As he is well aware of the danger that such enemies pose, he prefers to act indirectly, sending savage wolves and other animals of the forest to destroy fire-wielding enemies for him. Only if these means fail will he seek a direct confrontation.

The infusion of evil from the tainted soil of Tepest has given him several magical abilities that most of his kind do not possess. Once per day he may cast the following spells as a 12th-level druid: 1st—*animal friendship, entangle, locate animals or plants, putrefy food or drink;* 2nd—*charm person or mammal, create water, speak with animals, warp wood;* 3rd—*hold animal, plant growth, snare, spike growth, summon insects;* 4th—*animal summoning I, call woodland beings, hold plant, repel insects, speak with plants;* 5th—*animal growth, animal summoning II, antiplant shell, wall of thorns;* 6th—*antianimal shell, speak with monsters.* Blackroot has no need of components for his spells; they are all simple acts of will.

Blackroot has the ability to animate the trees of his forest, causing them to obey his mental commands. It takes one round for an animated tree to uproot itself, but once this is done it is fully mobile. At any given time he may have two such followers doing his bidding. These trees conform to the statistics for mature treants, having 10 Hit Dice and inflicting 3d6 points of damage with each of their two attacks. They are not actually intelligent but do serve as extensions of Blackroot's own consciousness. Trees under his control must remain within sixty yards of their master, or they revert to their normal status.

Habitat/Society: Blackroot began his life as a tree, not a treant. He was a majestic and noble plant towering above the other trees of the forest and fairly radiating health and stamina. Indeed, so wondrous was this fine oak that a sect of druids settled around it to protect and nurture the ancient plant.

It was not long, of course, before the hags who rule Tepest took notice both of the tree and its protectors. They saw that more and more people were turning to the ways of the druids, venerating nature and balance. Such a shift in attention away from the action of the coven was unacceptable to the darklords.

In order to set things straight, the hags decided to destroy the druids, making an example of them to the other inhabitants of Tepest. One by one, each of the druids was transformed into a twisted and putrefied tree. As these newly created trees took root, the other flora and fauna of the wilds began to change until they too were twisted and corrupted. So sinister and terrible were these new trees that the people of Tepest began to avoid the woods.

The great oak, however, they reserved for special attention. In their horrible iron cauldron, they brewed a special draught composed of things dark and dreadful. When their terrible brew was finished, they took it out into the forest and dribbled it on the roots of the tree. Every night for a month the trio gathered around the tree at midnight and repeated their dark ritual. In the end, as a full moon the color of blood rose into a cloudless sky, the great oak's transformation was completed. With the hags dancing and cackling over their success, Blackroot was born.

Over the years, this once-great tree has become more and more evil. Through the plants and animals of the forest, he keeps a careful eye on all that transpires in the Brujamonte. While he is not under any form of mental domination, he does the bidding of the hags out of respect for their greater evil and in the hopes that he might one day replace them as the master of Tepest.

Ecology: Blackroot survives on a diet of human, demihuman, and humanoid flesh. Because of the large number of goblins that infest the woods of Tepest, he is frequently able to satisfy his hunger without molesting travelers on the Timori Road. From time to time, however, he becomes hungry for sweeter, human flesh. Generally, this happens about once a month.

Anyone who enters the forests of southwestern Tepest instantly becomes aware of that place's evil nature. The trees produce bitter fruit, the streams are brackish, stinging insects swarm everywhere, and thorny undergrowth hinders progress in every direction.

Adventure Ideas: The players might come into contact with Blackroot and his forest entirely by accident. Such an encounter could easily occur as they traveled the Timori Road into or out of Tepest. Blackroot frequently orders his trees to attack caravans and parties traveling on that highway to satisfy his hunger for flesh.

On the other hand, the destruction of the druid cult could also be used as a motivation for the heroes to enter the Brujamonte. The very nature of this corrupted wood should entice any druid in the party to examine its mysteries. Groups without such a person in their company could easily be contacted and hired to learn what happened to the druids who once lived in Tepest.

Adventures centering on Blackroot should focus not only on the destruction of the evil treant but also on the restoration of the area. This was once an area of great natural splendor and, with an enormous amount of effort, it might someday be restored to that state.

Of course, the hags who rule Tepest are certain to take notice of anyone who attempts to destroy their handiwork. They take pride in the malignant ugliness of the Brujamonte, and heroes attempting to set right the changes that they have made are certain to be looked upon as challengers to their authority. As such, the hags will simply seek to destroy them.

In Prince of Shadows, the encounters in Blackroot's forest should be used merely as incentive for the heroes to turn back toward Briggdarrow. If they have entered the Brujamonte, they must have either missed or ignored the events that were intended to pull them into the adventure.

Glossary

Throughout this book a number of terms are used that may be unfamiliar. The following list defines of the most important of these words.

Avanc: A crocodilelike creature that dwells in the eastern regions of Lake Kronov in Tepest.

Alven: The Butterfly Folk, one of the Nine Breeds, masterful farmers and gardeners.

Anvolee: Arak city with a population of about five thousand, mostly changelings.

Arak: The Erlking, shadow elf hero who oversaw the construction of the Obsidian Gate and whose name the shadow elves took as their own.

Beliviue: Arak city, populated mainly by the sith.

Biting Tarn: An acrid, almost poisonous lake formed where the Falling River pours from the Greenlands onto the Stowndowns some five hundred feet below.

Black Marsh: An area of desolate swamp in the Shadow Rift haunted by gossamers and thick with will-o'-wisps.

Black Mithral: A mystical alloy made with mithral and pure shadowstuff. Black mithral can be made only on the Demiplane of Shadow. The *Sword of Arak* is forged from black mithral.

Brag: The Pony Folk, one of the Nine Breeds, stout laborers and skilled builders.

Brujamonte: A forested region in Tepest south of the Viktal and west of the Blackmist River.

Changeling: A person whose shadow has been stolen and pressed into servitude by the Arak.

***Crown of Arak*:** One of nine magical artifacts which comprise the *Regalia of Arak*. The crown belongs to Maeve and is currently hidden in the eternal flame atop the Malachite Palace.

Dancing Men: Another name for the muryan.

Darkenheights, The: A jagged stone mountain that rises out of the Black Marsh near the domain of Nova Vaasa. It is here that the Obsidian Gate stands.

Dearg-Due: Ghoullike creatures who serve Loht as members of the saugh.

Ellefolk: The elder race enslaved by Gwydion and from whom the shadow elves were created.

The Erlking: Arak, the lost leader of the shadow elves.

Esmerth: Arak city, populated mainly by shee.

Faerie Cake: A magical confection of black, crumbly cake used by the Arak to tempt men and women into becoming changelings.

Faerie Food: Any food or drink originating within the Shadow Rift. Mortals who eat or drink faerie food cannot thereafter ever gain sustenance again from mortal food, forever trapping them within the shadow-elves' world.

Faerie Gold: A metal which is identical to gold within the Shadow Rift but which turns to lead, stones, and other rubbish once removed from that domain.

Faerie Queen: Maeve's title as head of the Seelie Court.

Falling River: A wide, swift-moving river that rolls south from Loch Lenore across the Greenlands and finally cascades down upon the Stowndowns to form the Biting Tarn.

Fey: Another name for the shadow elves that includes all the Shadow Rift's many races a faerie folk.

Fir: The Hedgehog Folk, one of the Nine Breeds, clockwork engineers.

Fracture, The: A network of tunnels leading from the Wytchwood to the Shadow Rift.

Goblinwood: A forested region of Tepest north of the East Timori Road, between the Shadow Rift and Lake Kronov.

Gossamer: Ghostlike creatures who serve Loht as members of the saugh.

Green Lands, The: A strange region of the Shadow Rift where everything is supernaturally alive.

Gwydion: The sorcerer-fiend and former master of the shadow elves, native of the Demiplane of Shadow, who enslaved the ellefolk. Thought to have been left behind on the Demiplane of Shadow but actually trapped within the Obsidian Gate and seeking to escape. The true darklord of the Shadow Rift.

Kin: Another name for changelings, added onto the name of the Arak breed responsible for the changeling's creation (e.g., sheekin, sithkin, powriekin).

Korag: Chief of the goblin tribe that lives in the Goblinwood of Tepest, an ally of Loht's powrie minions.

Lesser Breeds: A term describing the tremendously diverse races of fey not counted among the Nine Breeds.

Loch Lenore: The small, deep lake formed where the Hidden River plunges into the Shadow Rift. Source of the Falling River.

Loht: The Prince of Shadows, Lord of the Unseelie Court, son of Arak the Erlking, brother to Maeve, Wielder of the *Sword of Arak*, Prince of the Sith, and the villain of the piece. Co-ruler with Maeve of the Shadow Rift.

Maeve: The Faerie Queen, Lord of the Seelie Court, daughter of Arak the Erlking, sister to Loht, Princess of the Shee. Co-ruler with Loht of the Shadow Rift.

Malinda: Princess of the Powrie and loyal ally of Loht. She leads the search for the *Crown of Arak*.

Malachite Palace: The traditional seat of Arak power in the Shadow Rift, home to both Maeve and Loht. An eerily beautiful but unsettling building.

McCollin, Arla: A young girl, one of two survivors of the muryan attacks on Briggdarrow.

McCollin, Kian: A young boy, one of two survivors of the Muryan attacks on Briggdarrow.

Mohrg: The Dancing Prince, Lord of the Muryan, leader of the first attack on Briggdarrow. A close friend and loyal ally of Loht.

Muryan: The Dancing Men, one of the Nine Breeds, fierce warriors.

Nine Breeds: Term used to describe the nine major divisions of the Arak race.

Northern Rift: The region of the Shadow Rift to the west of the Stowndowns, including the Plateaus and the Greenlands.

Obsidian Gate: The magical portal constructed by Arak and his followers which allowed the shadow elves to escape from Gwydion and the Demiplane of Shadow.

Plateaus, The: A series of largely unexplored terraces and mountains located in the Northern Rift.

Portune: The Turtle Folk and Asp Folk, one of the Nine Breeds, great healers and curious scholars.

Powrie: Redcaps, one of the Nine Breeds, spritelike chaotic evil assassins and spies.

Prince of Shadows or **Shadow-Prince, The:** Loht's title as head of the Unseelie Court.

Redcaps: Another name for the powrie, so-called for their habit of dipping their hats in the blood of their victims.

Regalia of Arak: The collection of nine magical relics needed to open or close the Obsidian Gate. One of these items is entrusted to the Prince or Princess of each of the Nine Breeds.

Saugh: The army of the dead created by Loht but secretly controlled by Gwydion.

Seelie Court: Those shadow elves who give their allegiance to Maeve, primarily the shee, portune, alven, and fir.

Shadow Elves: The name applied to the Arak while they lived on the Demiplane of Shadow.

Shee: The Fair Folk, one of the Nine Breeds, seductive loremasters, musicians, and storytellers.

Sith: The Pale Ones, one of the Nine Breeds, evil and methodical creatures with a fascination for death.

Southern Rift: The regions of the Shadow Rift to the east of the Greenlands, including the Stowndowns, Black Marsh, and Darkenheights.

Stowndowns, The: A barren and rocky land in the Southern Rift surrounded by the Black Marsh.

***Sword of Arak*:** One of the nine magical artifacts which comprise the *Regalia of Arak*. The sword belongs to Loht, who just recovered it after long trials (as described in the module *Servants of Darkness*).

Teg: The Burrowers, one of the Nine Breeds, feral and wild creatures, masterful hunters.

Temporal Fugue: The disjunction in time that causes one year to pass in the Shadow Rift for every fortnight (fourteen days) in the rest of the Demiplane of Dread.

Unseelie Court: Those shadow elves who give their allegiance to Loht, primarily the sith, muryan, powrie, and teg.

The White Lady: The name given to Maeve by the residents of Briggdarrow and Viktal.

Wytchwood: A forested region of Tepest south of the East Timori Road, between the Shadow Rift and Blackmist River.

the Shadow Rift

by William W. Connors, Cindi Rice & John D. Rateliff

SCANNED BY: JACK D. KNIGHT

For many years folk have gazed into the churning black vapors of the Shadow Rift and wondered at the horrors that might lie within. Some have speculated that it might be a realm of the doomed, where tortured spirits suffer the hours of eternity. Others have speculated that it might be an empty domain, waiting for the arrival of a master who is evil enough to claim it and shape it in his own image. Even the mysterious Vistani do not know what secrets are hidden in the depths of this gaping chasm.

Now, the time has come for the veil of shadows to be parted. Loht, king of the shadow elves, has reclaimed the mighty *Sword of Arak*. With this relic, he intends to set in motion a plan that has taken thousands of years to form. He will throw open that very gate of darkness and invite one of mankind's greatest enemies to walk the land of the living.

And if he is not stopped, the rivers of Ravenloft will run red with the blood of the innocent.

This adventure can be played independently or in conjunction with the RAVENLOFT® adventure *Servants of Darkness*.

For four to six characters of levels 7–9.

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ISBN 0-7869-0737-1
9 780786 907373 52295
Sug. Retail:
U.S. $22.95 CAN $29.95
EAN